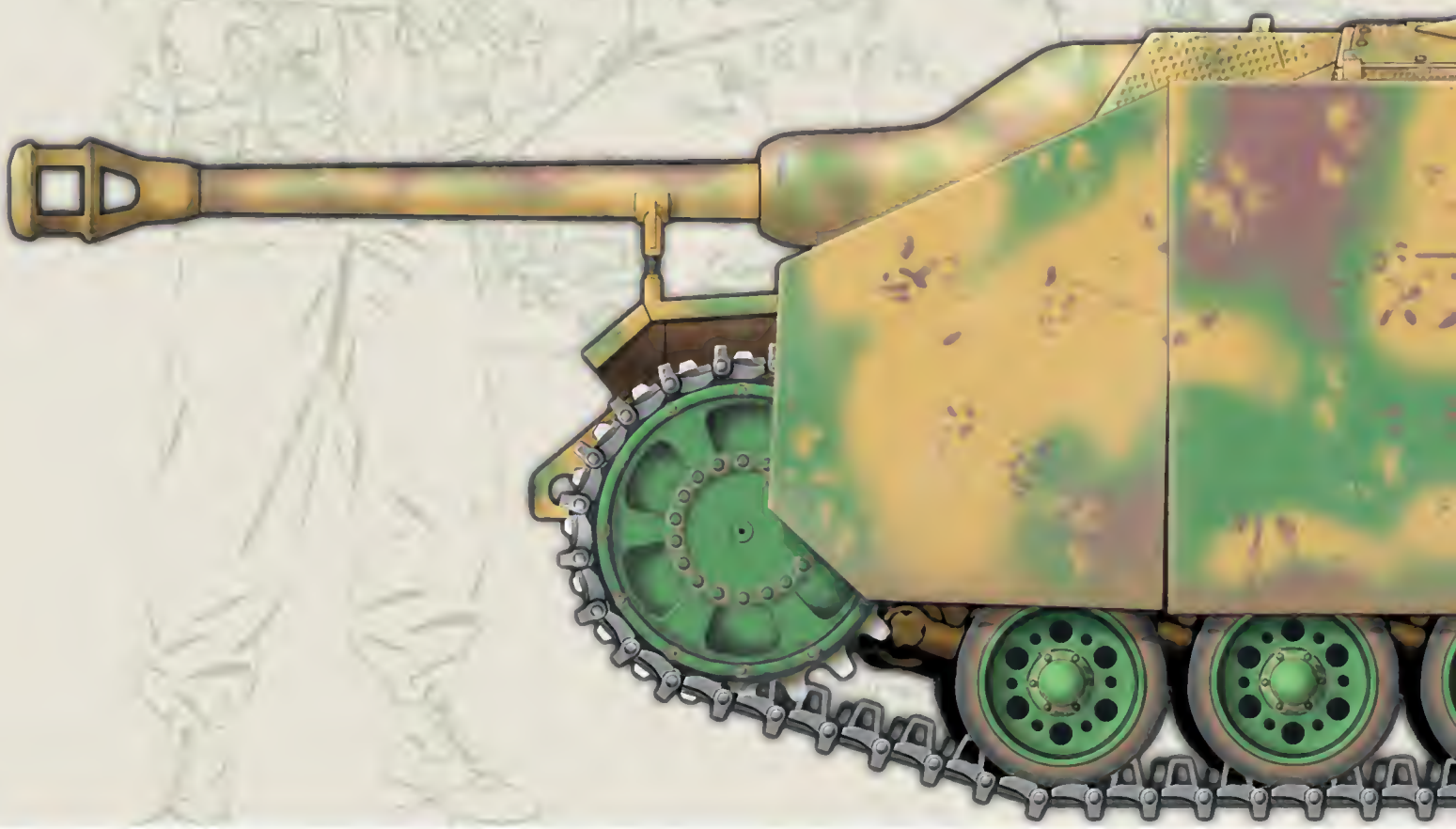
FIREFLY COLLECTION No.8

SOLDATEN

THE GERMAN SOLDIER IN WORLD WAR 2

1. HOLLAND

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
DENNIS OLIVER
AND
STEPHEN ANDREW



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In oddition to the websites mentioned obove, the following printed works were also consulted: ***It Never Snows In September.*** *Kershow, R.J.* ***The Forgotten Battle. Overloon and The Maas Salient.*** *Narthols Altes, A.* ***German Armoured Units At Arnhem September 1944.*** *Zwarts, M.* ***The Struggle For Europe****. Wilmot, C.* ***Breakaut.Drive To the Seine.*** *Masan, D.* ***Panzers In The Bocage.*** *Berne, K.* ***A Saund Like Thunder.*** *Oliver, D.* ***Defense Of The Rhine.*** *Zalaga, S.* ***Operatian Cabra.*** *Zalaga, S.* ***Operatian Plunder.*** *Saunders, T.* ***Hell's Highway.*** *Saunders, T.* ***SdKfz 173 Jagdpanther.*** *Markawsky, A, Melleman. T ond Skwiat, T.* ***Walcheren.*** *Braaks, R.* ***Armor Battles Of The Waffen-SS.*** *Fey, W.* ***Steel Inferno.*** *Reynalds, M.* ***Die Truppenkennzeicen der Verbände und Einheiten der deutschen Wehrmacht und Waffen-SS und ihre Einsätze im Zweiten Weltkrieg 1939-1945.*** *Schmitz, P and Theis K-J.* ***Tigers In Combat II.*** *Schneider, W.* ***The Western Front. Memoirs of A Panzer Lehr Officer.*** *Ritgen, H.* ***Panzers In The Gunsights.*** *Zalaga, S.* ***Germany's Panther Tank: The Quest far Cambat Supremacy.*** *Jentz, T.* ***Schutzenpanzer.*** *Culver, B ond Feist, U.* ***Duel In The Mist.*** *Haasler, T.* ***Achtung Panzer Na.4 Panther, Jagdpanther & Brummbar.*** *Bitah, M. (Editar).* ***Panzer Tracts 9-3 Jagdpanther Panzerjaeger Panther.*** *Jentz, T and Doyle, H.L.* ***Steel Rain. Waffen SS Panzer Battles In The West.*** *Ripley, T.* ***Panzerwrecks 3.*** *Archer, L and Auerboch, W.* ***Panzerwrecks 6.*** *Archer, L ond Auerbach, W.* ***Panzertruppen 2.*** *Jentz, T. L. (Editor)* ***Panzer IV and its Variants.*** *Spielberger, W J.* ***Pz.Kpfw. IV Ausf G/H/J. Vol 2.*** *Trojco, W.* ***Panzerjäger und Sturmgeschütze.*** *Schiebert, H.* ***Achtung Panzer Na. 5. Sturmgeschütz III, Stug. IV & SIG.33.*** *Bitoh, M. (Editar).* ***Sturmartillerie.*** *Spielberger, W.J and Feist, U.* ***Sturmgeschütz III and IV 1942-45.*** *Doyle, H and Jentz, T.* ***Sdkfz 251.*** *Ledwach, J.* ***Sturmgeschütz III.*** *Culver, B.*

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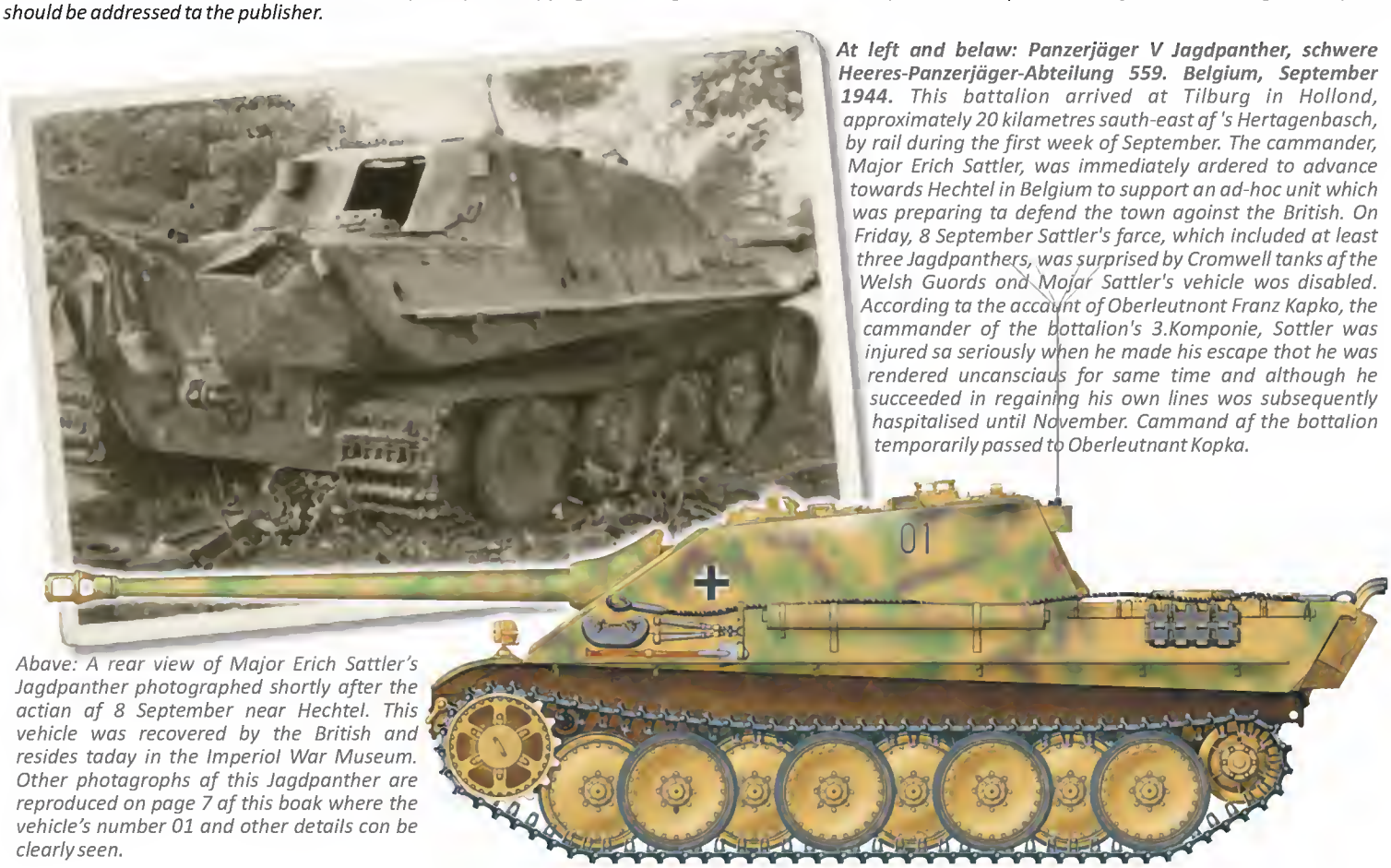


At left and belaw: Panzerjäger V Jagdpanther, schwere Heeres-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 559. Belgium, September 1944. *This battalion arrived at Tilburg in Hollond, approximately 20 kilametres sauth-east af 's Hertagenbasch, by rail during the first week of September. The cammander, Major Erich Sattler, was immediately ardered to advance towards Hechtel in Belgium to support an ad-hoc unit which was preparing ta defend the town againt the British. On Friday, 8 September Sattler's farce, which included at least three Jagdpanthers, was surprised by Cromwell tanks af the Welsh Guords ond Major Sattler's vehicle wos disabled. According ta the account of Oberleutnont Franz Kapko, the cammander of the bottalion's 3.Komponie, Sottler was injured sa seriously when he made his escape thot he was rendered uncansciaus for same time and although he succeeded in regaining his own lines wos subsequently haspitalised until November. Cammand af the bottalion temporarily passed to Oberleutnant Kopka.*

Abave: A rear view of Major Erich Sattler's Jagdpanther photographed shortly after the actian af 8 September near Hechtel. This vehicle was recovered by the British and resides taday in the Imperiol War Museum. Other photagrophs af this Jagdpanther are reproduced on page 7 af this boak where the vehicle's number 01 and other details con be clearly seen.

After almost two months of savage fighting in the Bocage country of northern France the divisions of US 1st Army, in a massive offensive codenamed Cobra, broke through the German front and advanced rapidly to occupy the Cotentin Peninsula. Throughout the last days of July 1944, the Americans continually fed fresh infantry and armoured formations into the battle until, by the end of the month, German resistance had largely collapsed. On 30 July, in an effort to protect the flank of the American attack and to pin the German armoured units in the eastern sector of the Normandy front, the British launched their own operation, codenamed Bluecoat. Despite a series of German counterattacks - the most important of which was conducted around Mortain - the American advance could not be halted and by Tuesday, 8 August the strategically important town of Le Mans, the headquarters of Oberstgruppenführer Paul Hausser's 7.Armee and the crossing of the Sarthe River, had been captured. During the following week Canadian units commenced Operation Tractable aimed at linking up with the Americans and encircling the remnants of 5.Panzerarmee and 7.Armee which for the most part had crossed the Orne River and were attempting to withdraw towards the Seine, almost 80 kilometres to the east. On 19 August, elements of the Polish armoured division advancing from the north made contact with the American units near Chambois, some 15 kilometres south-east of Falaise, and after three days and nights of continuous and bitter fighting, the gap - through which the last German units managed to escape and which famously took its name from the town - was eventually sealed. The battles at Mortain and the Falaise Gap are described in greater detail in our fourth title in this series, A Sound Like Thunder: Mortain and Falaise, August 1944.

The German units stationed in France and those lucky enough to have escaped the Falaise Pocket were now in headlong retreat towards the Rhine and the relative safety of the prepared positions of the Westwall. During the first week of September alone Antwerp, Dieppe, Le Havre and Boulogne-sur-Mer all fell to the British and Canadians while the Americans were closing on Aachen and the Saar. With the Allies approaching the Dutch border the civilian population of much of Holland began to celebrate their impending liberation culminating in what became known as Dolle Dinsdag - or mad Tuesday - on 5 September. Patriotic flags were flown from buildings while factories and offices were deserted as many people simply took to the streets. Although their elation was to prove premature the rumours generated were also largely believed by the Germans - at least initially - with many non-military personnel being evacuated to the Reich and large numbers of important and sensitive documents destroyed. Similarly, Dutch railway workers announced that they would strike on 17 September and although their actions could have had only a limited effect on the German supply lines, once again panic on the part of the occupying forces produced disproportionate results. On the military front however the Allies had by this time made only the tiniest of penetrations of Dutch territory with the Americans crossing the border near Maastricht on Saturday, 9 September and taking Zuid-Limburg on the following Tuesday. Further to the east the British and Canadians were on the Maas-Schelde canal but Holland - in particular the area north of the Rhine where the bulk of the Dutch population lived - would have to wait until 5 May 1945 to be liberated.

The ease with which the US, British and Canadian forces had advanced through the Low Counties in the north and towards the borders of Germany in the centre and south had seduced the Allied command into believing the Germans were spent as a military force just as it had the Dutch civilian population. The staggering losses of the summer battles in Normandy and Brittany - coupled with those suffered on the Eastern Front - could surely not be made good within any reasonable time frame. Rearguard attempts to halt the Allied advance were often overrun with little difficulty while German counterattacks were hastily prepared and usually brushed aside with ease. Many of the superbly trained and equipped units that the Wehrmacht possessed at the beginning of June 1944 had simply ceased to exist. By early September however the situation began to change, albeit almost imperceptibly at first. Although the city of Antwerp fell to the Allies on 4 September it was ineffective as a port while the Scheldt Estuary remained in German hands. Importantly the Allied failure to capture the approaches to the port would mean that over sixty thousand troops of General Gustav-Adolf von Zangen's 15.Armee would escape - although much of their heavy equipment was left behind. These men were used to bolster the garrison of the central Netherlands.

On the very day Antwerp was abandoned, Generalfeldmarschall Gerd von Rundstedt was recalled from retirement and reinstated as Oberbefehlshaber West (OB West) replacing Generalfeldmarschall Walter Model who had held the post for just eighteen days and was now relegated to the command of Heeresgruppe B. Revered by both the ordinary soldiers and the German civilian population, Rundstedt was well past his prime and there can be little doubt that his appointment was based largely on considerations of morale. The main responsibility for saving the situation would rest with the brilliant and energetic Model who wasted no time in formulating a plan which would allow Germany to hold the Western Front against an estimated sixty full-strength Allied divisions.

The plan envisaged a line running from Antwerp, following the Albert Canal to the Meuse and then the Siegfried Line as far as the Franco-Luxembourg border and held by twenty-five fresh divisions with a further five or six Panzer or Panzergrenadier divisions held in reserve. That there was not a single fresh division available at the time suggests that perhaps even senior commanders were not fully aware of the extent of the crisis now facing Germany.

Below: A heavily camaufloged Sturmgeschütz III ausf G, probably of schwere Panzerjäger-Abteilung 559, photographed in the town of 's Hertogenbosch, approximately thirty kilometres north of Eindhoven. On Monday, 23 October 1944 the battalion's 3.Kompanie, which was at the time stationed at Utrecht and commanded by Oberleutnant Franz Kapka, was ordered to proceed towards 's Hertogenbosch to support the grenadiers of 712.Infanterie-Division in an attempt to secure the town. The fourteen assault guns of 3.Kompanie travelled as far as Zaltbommel on the Waal by train and covered the last 16 kilometres on their own tracks, arriving late in the evening of 25 October. Most of the company spent the next morning searching for fuel while Oberleutnant Kapka, accompanied by one of his NCOs, made a reconnoissance towards the centre of town. Arriving at the Diezebrug - the bridge over the river Dieze - Kapka found that the bridge was not only intact but that the explosives which would have destroyed it were missing. Locating a box of dynamite the Germans were able to comprehensively wreck the Diezebrug, apparently detonating the charge with a grenade
Right: A photograph taken inside the railway station at 's Hertogenbosch at the time of the battle to retake the town. The officer in the centre quite possibly Oberleutnant Kapka.

While Rundstedt was making his way to his headquarters ond Model was begging the Oberkommanda der Wehrmacht (OKW) far reinfarcements, ta the complete surprise of everyone involved - including Hitler - Reichsmorscholl Göring announced that the Luftwaffe had ot that moment six Fallschirmjäger regiments ot vorious stoges of troining ond onticipated roising two more from wounded personnel returning from convolescent hospitols. This represented o farce of some twenty thousand men with a further ten thousand expected from surplus oircroft crews ond ground staff. These men would form the nucleus of 1.Fallschirm-Armee which was created an 4 September and placed under the commond of Generoloberst Kurt Student, who wos infarmed of his new role by a telephone coll from Hitler's heodquorters in Eost Prussio thot evening.

To allow himself some breathing spoce Model immediately dispatched his only available unit, 719.Infanterie-Division, ta the front with instructions ta assist in the defence of Antwerp - which unknown to Model hod olreody been lost. While moving towords the fighting the divisionol commonder, Generolleutnont Sievers, realised thot his men could not passibly orrive in time to intervene in the battle far the city and largely an his awn initiative positioned the farces available to him along the Albert canal between Merksem and Hasselt thereby denying the bridges in the area ta the enemy (1, see page 32). To reinfarce his divislon - which wos now defending o front of some sixty kilometres - Sievers wos oble to scrope together men from vorious formotions including artillery and engineer units from 347.Infanterie-Division, which had been moving thraugh the area by train, and the first battalian af SS-Grenadier-Regiment Londstorm Nederland made up of Dutch volunteers.

When Sievers reached the conol he found that his left flonk wos held by the remnants af 85.Infanterie-Divisian, cammanded by Generalleutnant Curt Chill, which had been badly mauled during the retreat from Normandy. This farmotion had been ordered ta withdraw to Germany however Chill, displaying o breathtoking disregord for his instructions, hod obsorbed the survivors of 59.Infonterie-Division together with other strogglers ond moved towords the Albert Canal - marching towards the sound af the guns, as it were (2).

By such displays of individual leadership ond courage the line wos nat anly held but begon to consolidote. The octions of Generalleutnont Chill alone would allow Student the time to deploy 1.Follschirm-Armee while other scrotch units made up af Luftwaffe and Kriegsmarine personnel could also be rushed to the frant, quickly fallawed by the survivars af 15.Armee.

Perhaps inspired by such locol successes, ond Göring's offer of such o lorge ond highly motivoted force, Hitler promised Model thot the next two hundred Pzkw V Panther tanks to leave the assembly lines wauld be earmarked far Heeresgruppe B while all Pzkw VI Tiger tanks, Jagdpanther tank destrayers and 8.8cm onti-aircroft ond onti-tank guns thot were availoble in Germony would be transferred to the West. All new medium armoured vehicles however, such os the Pzkw IV tonk ond Sturmgeschütz III ossoult guns, were allocote to the armies in the east where the situation was, if onything, worse.

As a further reinforcement the serviceable units of II.SS-Panzerkorps, mode up of the Frundsberg and Hohenstaufen divisions, were sent to Model on 5 September. Reduced to less than seven thousond men this formotion, commanded by Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Bittrich, hod been severely mauled in the Normandy campaign and Madel statianed bath divisians in what he considered safe areas around Eindhoven and Arnhem. This was to have far reoching implicotions for the very neor future.

The foll of Antwerp allowed the Germons anly a very brief respite however and within three days the British resumed offensive aperatians which wauld devalve inta a series of small yet vicious battles that would anly end with the cammencement of Operatian Market Garden an 17 September.

On Thursdoy, 7 September odvonce units of the British Guords Armoured Division having crassed the Albert Canal averran the town af Helchteren but were halted at the crassraads town af Hechtel. Held by a battalian af Panzer-Ersatz-und Ausbildungs-Regiment Hermann Göring, Hechtel lies some 15 kilometres from the Dutch-Belgion border on the rood to Eindhoven. The town's garrison wos supported by o Kompfgruppe of roughly two bottolions of Follschirmjöger commanded by Mojar Franz Grassmel, positianed neorby in the village af Wijchmaal. In three days af heavy fighting the British threw two full ormoured regiments ot the town but were unable to dislodge the defenders. Attempts ta reinfarce the Fallschirmjäger, including the ottack canducted an 8 September by the Jagdponthers of schwere Heeres-Ponzerjäger-Abteilung 559, oll met with failure - olthough the garrison held on stubbornly. On Sundoy, 10 September the British succeeded in autflanking the German position when units of the Irish Guords reached the banks of the Meuse-Escaut Conal, securing a crassing near Neerpelt by the fallawing Tuesday.

Thus the last water obstacle separating Halland fram Belgium was avercame goining far the British a direct raute olong Highway 69 to Eindhoven, Nijmegen and Arnhem. On the day the British crossed the canal Major Grassmel and a number of his men obondoned Hechtel leaving behind two hundred and twenty wounded men who could not be evocuoted, o further five hundred who hod been taken prisaner and ane hundred ond fifty af their comrades wha had been killed. The tawn itself was almast completely destroyed. Within twenty-faur hours the first in a series of counterottacks against the bridgehead ot Neerpelt was launched by quickly formed od-hoc battle graups. The initiol ottacks were mode by Follschirmjäger Regiment von Hoffmonn ond Follschirmjäger Regiment von der Heydte reinforced by on infontry group mode up of men from the Frundsberg and Hohenstaufen divisians. They were later jained by a campany of assault guns probably from schwere Heeres-Panzerjöger-Abteilung 559 (3).

After a disappointing effort by van der Heydte's regiment to reduce the bridgehead on 14 September, Oberst Erich Walther - on experienced paratroop officer who had fought in Norway, Hollond, Crete, Sicily ond at Monte Cassino - wos oppointed by Student, the 1.Follschirm-Armee commander, to co-ordinote the ottacks. Additionol units orrived including Luftwoffe-Bewährungs-Batoillon 6 - a penal unit - which had been transferred from Italy, the men still wearing their trapical unifarms. The fallawing day, in driving rain, van der Heydte's men resumed their ottacks with a battolion of Hoffman's unit ond two battolions of SS grenodiers conducting o diversionory ossoult. Once ogoin the Germons were unsuccessful, driven back by intense ortillery fire losing three of the Ponzerjäger battalian's assoult guns. On 16 September Student ordered Wolther to continue with his attacks but it was soon apparent that the British were far taa strang and the Germans limited themselves to minar probes, Walther preferring ta consolidate his defences. During thot doy ond into the night Germon units olong the whole front were reporting signs of continuous movement behind the enemy's lines suggesting that o lorge ossoult wos imminent.

All through the morning of 17 September Oberst Wolther's men ond the other units on their flanks - Kampfgruppe Chill and Divlsion Erdmann - watched in owe ond concern as wave after wove of Allied transport aircraft overflew their positians heading narth-east anly ta return same haurs later flying in the appasite directian. They could have been under no illusians as to what this meont ond indeed a number of the Luftwoffe officers on the ground hod participoted in similor operotions. Abruptly ot 2.00pm intense ond accurote

This battered Sturmgeschütz III from SS.Ponzer-Regiment 10 of the Frundsberg division wos photographed in the town of Mooseik on the Dutch-Belgian border, south-east af Raermund during the general withdrawal af August-September 1944. The regiment's seventh and eighth companies were equipped with Sturmgeschütz III ossault guns, although most had been lost during the bottles in Normandy and the Falaise Gap. During the fighting for Arnhem, II.Abteilung would be able ta field just faur of these vehicles together with a campany-sized farce of Pzkw IV tanks. A calaur illustration of this assault gun and its unusual marking, barely visible in this photograph, is depicted on the outside back cover.

Above: Germon infontrymen photogrophed in Holland in September or October 1944. Inset: A propagonda postcard urging Dutchmen to enlist in the Woffen-SS. During the fighting for Arnhem, III.Abteilung of SS-Grenodier-Regiment Londstorm Nederland wos ottached to 9.SS-Panzer-Division ond went into action for the first time near Elst on 21 September. Eorlier that month the first and second battalians had taken port in the defence of the Albert Canol line and had in fact faced their countrymen of the Brigade Prinses Irene. On 1 November the regiment was renamed SS-Freiwilligen-Brigade Londstarm Nederland, with most of its reinforcements mode up of volunteers from the Dutch Fascist youth organisation supplemented by SS-Wochbatoillon Nordwest, ond after o brief period of training the brigade moved into positions on the river Waal. On 10 February 1945 the brigode was raised to division status os 34.SS-Freiwilligen-Grenodier-Division Landstorm Nederlond and was immediotely ordered to relieve Fallschirmjöger-Regiment 7 olong the Waal east of Rhenen. Despite o lock of heavy equipment and falling morale, the division performed well even manoging a successful counterattack on 23 Februory neor Zetten obout 6 kilometres east of Elst between the Waal ond the Rhine. Driven back to the area around Oosterbeek, the survivors surrendered on 5 May, although o small detachment held out in the village of Veenendaal until 9 May 1945. Also shown is the orange, white and blue ormshield identifying Dutch units or personnel of the Waffen-SS.

artillery fire began falling on the German positions followed almost immediotely by an aerial bombardment which blasted the length of the Volkenswoord road. At 3.00pm tanks of the Irish Guords moved out of their bridgehead in the opening phose of Operotion Garden, the ground offensive aimed ot linking up with the Allied airborne forces dropped between Eindhoven and Arnhem. Although the bombordment hod destroyed all nine onti-tonk guns of o Ponzerjäger company ottoched to Hoffmon's regiment, a single plotoon of Mojor Kerrut's bottolion armed with Panzerfoust onti-tonk weopons accounted for nine tonks ond o personnel carrier holding up the entire British column, ultimately denying them Eindhoven ond its bridge which they hod expected to toke by 5.00pm (4). By the time Eindhoven hod been coptured, o full forty-eight hours loter, the oirborne force in Arnhem wos surrounded. Further, in whot must have been one of the lost successful operotions undertoken by the Germon air force during the wor, Eindhoven wos ottocked by the Luftwoffe during the night of 19 September while the town wos packed with British supply vehicles.

The ensuing bottles olong Highwoy 69 between Volkenswoord ond Nijmegen and the fighting for Arnhem ore for beyond the scope of this book with the Germon forces for the most part formed into ad-hoc bottle groups, many of which were roised, reorgonised or disbonded on on olmost doily bosis. For o detoiled occount I con do no better than refer the reoder to Robert J. Kershow's book, It Never Snows In September which, olthough doted in some ospects - most minor - is certolnly the best English language occount of the bottle.

During the next week, while fighting roged in Arnhem ond Oosterbeek, the Germon units focing the British armoured odvonce manoged not only to delay their enemies but to cut the highwoy ot severol points in their reor. In this, Kompfgruppe Wolther wos oided greotly by the orrivol of Mojor von Moltzohn's Ponzer-Brigode 107. (5)

Indeed, on 23 September the British found it necessory to send a unit of the Guords Armoured Division some 19 kilometres to the south to secure the road. On the following doy the rood was ogoin cut, this time ot Veghel by the tonks of Panzer-Brigade 107, opproximately 30 kilometres north of Eindhoven, and on the some day the decision wos made to obandon the operation's main objective - o crossing of the Rhine - ond to estoblish o front ot Nijmegen. Although the British monoged to open the highwoy on the following doy they now found themselves defending o huge salient which Model lost little time in counterattacking.

On 30 September, in on effort to widen the corridor, the Allies with the US 7th Armored Division in the lead, lounched on ottock towords the town of Overloon which lies some 25 kilometres eost of Eindhoven close to the western bonk of the river Maas. The front line here wos held by Fallschirmjäger-Regiment 21, o Luftwoffe Flok unit ond Kompfgruppe Roestel - the lotter mode up primarily of SS-Ponzerjöger-Abteilung 10 which had fought in the battles for Arnhem (6).

This bottle, which went almost unnoticed ot the time and is largely ignored today, proved to be one of the fiercest struggles of the campaign. The American tanks valiantly threw themselves at the German lines time and again but were stopped on each occasion by the extensive minefields - which the Germans had created in the morshy ground - the Ponthers of Ponzer-Brigode 107 and Kampfgruppe Walther, both of which were used as a mobile reserve. On 2 October the Americans reached Overloon but were once again pushed back in fighting which descended into a hand-to-hond struggle. By now it was quite obvious that the Allies had, once again, underestimoted their opposition and as if to underscore the point the Germans managed to launch no less than seven counterattacks on 4 October alone

By 8 October the American division was completely exhausted and was replaced by the British 11th Armoured ond 3rd Infantry divisions. The British formations began their assault on Overloon from both the east and west at noon on 12 October preceded by o massive artillery borrage ond immediately found themselves mired in the swampy ground which surrounded the town. Hompered by mines, thick mud and snipers they nevertheless secured the town on 14 October. The lost German defenders, barricoded in the church, refused to surrender ond were killed to o mon.

The outlying village of Loobeek was taken on Monday, 16 October and Venray to the south on the following Thursday. The general Allied advance in this area was, for the moment, put on hold as the divisions would be needed for the operations to clear the Scheldt Estuary far to the north. While the fighting around Overloon was underway the focus of attention had shifted to another sector of the front.

On 1 October the Germans launched a limited assault to recapture Elst, situated almost exactly halfway between Arnhem and Nijmegen, with elements of Panzergrenadier-Regiment 10 and Panzergrenadier-Regiment 11 of Generalleutnant von Elverfeldt's 9.Panzer-Division. The expected support from 116.Panzer-Division did not materialise and in its place the Tiger tanks of schwere Panzer-Abteilung 506 and the survivors of Kampfgruppe Knaust were attached to Elverfeldt's command. The operation met was some success however the units of 10.SS-Panzer-Division, which were to support the right wing of the attack, stalled at the very outset and at around noon the main thrust ran into a fresh British infantry division supported by tanks. During the night the promised units of 116.Panzer-Division arrived and the following morning the attack was resumed. This time the British were prepared and in a whirlwind of artillery fire and aerial bombing the second battalion of Panzergrenadier-Regiment 11 was so badly shaken that it was withdrawn behind the Rhine on 3 October and although Elverfeldt threw the assault guns of Panzerjäger-Abteilung 50 into the battle they were unable to dislodge the British (7).

On 4 October the Germans limited their attacks to minor probes and during the afternoon were stunned by an Allied counterattack which hit the junction of 9.Panzer-Division and 10.SS-Panzer-Division. During the night Elverfeldt was ordered to pull back behind the Rhine and on 7 October his division, less Panzerjäger-Abteilung 50, was withdrawn to Germany to rest and refit while 116.Panzer-Division was sent to support the units fighting around Aachen.

By 27 October, 9.Panzer-Division had returned to the front and was ordered to open an attack from Venlo, on the east bank of the Maas, towards Asten which would then be exploited by 15.Panzergrendier-Division. On the first day the division performed well reaching the village of Meijel and the outskirts of Liessel, some 20 kilometres east of Eindhoven and just 5 kilometres short of their objective, despite the fact that Panzergrenadier-Regiment 11 could not be found and the Panther tanks of II.Abteilung, Panzer-Regiment 33 did not arrive until well into the afternoon. The Allied defence, made up primarily of units of US 7th Armored Division, began to harden as the day wore on and was increasingly supported by large numbers of fighter-bombers. To compound the German's woes the day ended with the assault guns of Panzerjäger-Abteilung 50 blundering into a minefield and losing five vehicles. On the following morning 15.Panzergrenadier-Division attacked to the north of 9.Panzer-Division and by the end of the day had advanced as far as the open fields to the east of Liessel. Led by its reconnaissance battalion and elements of Panzergrenadier-Regiment 11, both now under the command of Major von Bockhoff, 9.Panzer-Division reached the woods east of Asten but could go no further. Later that day the Americans launched their first counterattacks and although they were repulsed it was clear that the Germans had lost the initiative with both division commanders suggesting that the operation be called off. Nevertheless another attack went forward on 29 October with 15.Panzergrenadier-Division capturing the town of Liessel. The resumption of the advance towards Asten by 9.Panzer-Division, the original objective of the assault, went badly however and by noon OB West had called a halt.

That evening Model asked that a final attempt be made the next day to capture Asten and Rundstedt relented. The attack went badly from the beginning with Panzergrenadier-Regiment 10 running head an into an American counterattack and, already exhausted, suffering high losses. During the next day and into the night the Germans went over to the defence and prepared for the counterattacks they knew would come while 9.Panzer-Division was withdrawn from the front.

On 2 October 1944, while Model's force was attempting to recapture Elst, the Canadians began their advance towards the German positions in the Scheldt Estuary in an attempt to clear the approaches to Antwerp. The German defences consisted of the three divisions of General Von Zangen's 15.Armee supported by Kampfgruppe Chill which had fought so resolutely on the Albert Canal (2). In anticipation of the coming attack Zangen had positioned 64.Infantrie-Division in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, 70.Infantrie-Division on the island af Walcheren and Zuid-Beveland and 719.Infanterie-Division north of Antwerp.

By 5 October the Canadians had crossed the Dutch-Belgian border and on the following day were just 5 kilometres from Woensdrecht, south-west of Raasendaal. The town of Haagerheide was captured after heavy fighting but the surrounding area had been flooded and further progress was almost impossible. Further, aerial reconnaissance reported that a large force, including tanks and artillery, was concentrating in the forest south of Bergen op Zoom, directly in front of the Allied front, and recently taken prisoners showed the Canadians they were facing German Fallschirmjäger. This was in fact Kampfgruppe Chill which had been ordered to deny the enemy the Kreekrakdam, the main causeway across the 300 foot-wide Bevelland Canal, the loss of which would severely hamper communications with 15.Armee. The fighting here dragged on until 16 October when Woensdrecht was finally lost and despite a counterattack on the following day German forces in South Bevelland and Walcheren were now cut off. On 24 October after an intense artillery barrage Canadian infantry supported by tanks began an assault on the Kreekrakdam and very quickly succeeded in breaking through the initial German defences. Once on the causeway however the tanks were highly vulnerable to the many obstacles backed by anti-tank guns and were forced to withdraw allowing the infantry to try to force their way across. On the following day the village of Rilland was lost, quickly followed by Krabbendijke as the Germans were pushed further back across South Beveland. During the early hours of 26 October, to support the Canadians advancing from the west, a British amphibious assault was made from Terneuzen with the first troops landing near Hoedekenskerke shortly before 5.00am. The attacking force encountered little resistance and within two hours the complete force was deployed on the peninsula. On 29 October the two forces linked up and within two days all South Bevelland was secured. The British and Canadians now turned their attention to Walcheren (8).

As early as 3 October the dyke at Westkapelle was bombed by the RAF in an attempt to inundate the peninsula and hamper the German defence. Similar attacks were carried out on the dykes at Flushing and Veere in the following weeks and the defenders were forced to retreat to the few remaining areas of high ground. On the afternoon of 31 October the Canadians attempted to storm the causeway across the Slae Canal which separates South Beveland from Walcheren and were stopped halfway with heavy casualties. A further attack later that night met with stiff opposition and managed to advance no further. On 1 November, advancing behind a creeping barrage, a single company was able to reach the eastern end of the causeway and establish a bridgehead. The German defenders counterattacked immediately employing flamethrowers, probably operated by the men of Pionier-Bataillon 170 supported by Festungs-Infanterie-Regiment 1020, forcing the Canadians back onto the causeway on 2 November. Despite the arrival of a fresh battalion the Canadians were unable to expand their bridgehead.

An 8.8cm Flak 36 anti-aircraft gun abandoned on Highway 69 near the Neerpelt bridge. The official date given for this photograph is Wednesday, 13 September 1944 suggesting that this gun may be one of two such weapons operated by the Luftwaffe Flak battery attached to Kampfgruppe Walther.

Photographed near Waensdrecht on 27 October 1944 this Sturmhaubitze 42 of Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 280 was destroyed during the fighting for control of the approaches to the Scheldt Estuary between 9 and 16 October when the battalion was operating in the area in support of Kampfgruppe Chill. Although heavily damaged it is possible to see the Zimmerit applied to the hull front and other surfaces in the so-called waffle pattern indicative of assault guns assembled by the Alkett company, which was in fact the sole manufacturer of these howitzer armed vehicles. The hole in the welded gun mantlet for the coaxial machine gun was incorporated into production in June 1944 while the application of Zimmerit was dropped in September. The muzzle brake was also discontinued from production in September 1944 although some crews had simply removed theirs prior to that time.

In an unexpected turn of events a Dutch civilian appeared who was able to direct the Allied troops to a shallow crossing point and within hours a complete brigade was on Walcheren making their way towards the causeway bridgehead. On 4 November the two forces met and turned for Middelburg, the principal town, where Generalleutnant Wilhelm Daser, the 70.Infanterie-Division commander, surrendered without further resistance. During the early hours of 1 November British Commandos had landed at Flushing, the southern-most point of the peninsula some 7 kilometres to the south of Middelburg, followed within hours by an infantry battalion and other support units. The defence of the town was centred on a large concrete blockhouse which was also the headquarters of Oberst Eugen Reinhardt the commander of Festungs-Infanterie-Regiment 1019. The blockhouse was taken on 2 November but only after a prolonged attack by rocket armed fighter-bombers and the following day, faced with impossible odds, Reinhardt surrendered the city.

Westkapelle at the eastern tip of the peninsula was similarly assaulted from the sea during the night of 31 October-1 November by a force of Royal Marine Commandos preceded in spectacular fashion by a duel between the German coastal batteries and Royal Navy warships. Concentrating their fire on the ships however allowed the enemy landing craft to sail through the gap which had been created in the dyke almost completely unhindered and the town was captured by noon. The remaining batteries offered little resistance as the flooding of the peninsula had meant that their ammunition supplies could not be replenished and once exhausted, the gun crews only weapons were rifles and hand guns. From their bridgehead the Allies advanced to Domburg on the same day and reached Dishoek, just 5 kilometres from Flushing, on 2 November. At isolated artillery batteries and strongpoints, particularly in the wooded area near Oostkapelle, the Germans continued to offer resistance and the last units held out until 8 November. On the same day, after repeated enemy attacks, troops of General Carl Püchler's LXVII.Armeekorps withdrew from the bridgehead around Moerdijk across the river Maas towards Rotterdam (9).

While the battles for the Scheldt Estuary were underway the fighting for the Nijmegen corridor continued, most notably for the town of 's-Hertogenbosch an important road and rail junction and a stepping stone to the Moerdijk bridges over the river Maas (10). The area was defended by 59.Infanterie-Division commanded by Generalleutnant Walter Poppe to the south of 's-Hertogenbosch and Generalleutnant Friedrich-Wilhelm Neumann's 712.Infanterie-Division to the north which also included a battalion of 347.Infanterie-Division, three infantry battalions made up from Luftwaffe and Kriegsmarine personnel and what Neumann intriguingly described as 'ninety-two foreigners of all nationalities'.

On 22 October a combined British infantry and armour force advanced swiftly, capturing the outlying villages to the east and south-east of the town. Although the Germans were able to inflict significant losses on the attacking force and even mount limited counterattacks once darkness fell, a number of gaps had been opened in the line which the defenders were unable to plug. On the following day Neumann planned to counterattack towards Rosmalen with the assault guns of Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 1256 supported by infantry of his own division and the guns of Artillerie-Regiment 1712 (11). The assault was postponed at first due to a lack of fuel and then an enemy attack and did not begin until 4.30pm.

The attack immediately ran into trouble with two assault guns falling victim to their own artillery fire and as the grenadiers were riding on the vehicles in the open, infantry casualties were also high. The Germans pressed on however managing to pass Rosmalen and advance as far as Bruggen destroying a number of enemy tanks. As darkness descended intense artillery fire brought the attack to a halt. This limited success was offset by a British advance at Hintham, on the eastern edge of the city which was the location of Neumann's headquarters. A battalion of Grenadier-Regiment 732 which was tasked with restoring the defensive line was completely annihilated by the enemy's artillery fire and Hintham was abandoned during the night.

At 2.00am on 24 October the British attacked along the Nijmegen rail line capturing the new command post of 712.Infanterie-Division and pushing on to the river Dieze which runs through the centre of the city. By nightfall they had established a bridgehead along the Zuid-Willemsvaart on the river's south-western bank. Once again the assault guns of Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 1256 were thrown into the battle and succeeded in pushing the enemy back some way taking a number of prisoners. To the south the British were able to advance to the village of Vught, only 3 kilometres from the city centre, but could go no further and Vught remained in the hands of 59.Infanterie-Division. The situation was serious but the defenders were hanging on, reinforced that evening by a battalion of Artillerie-Regiment 256 with two batteries of heavy guns and a company of schwere-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 559 which would arrive early the next day.

At 11.00am on the following morning the assault on the city centre began with the enemy force on the Zuid-Willemsvaart following the line of the Dieze towards the Wilhelmina bridge and the Dammel Canal which runs parallel to the railway yards. By the end of the day the canal had been reached and the centre of the city was effectively under British control. During the night the defenders experienced the heaviest artillery bombardment of the battle so far and Neumann lost radio communication with the units under his command. Forced to rely on runners to carry his orders he later blamed this and the paucity of artillery ammunition as the principle reasons for the loss of the city.

On 26 October the British were oble to secure the west side of the Dommel conol ond the two pincers of the British ottock were oble to link up ot the Vught bridge on the southern edge of 's-Hertogenbosch, oll but ending the bottle. The following doy Neumonn counterottocked with the meogre forces left to him, including the ossoult guns of schwere-Ponzerjöger-Abteilung 559, but could moke no headwoy ond during the evening the Germons withdrew to the northern bonk of the Moos ocross the bridge neor Vlijmen which they promptly destroyed.

And so, in just over two months of heavy fighting, with the exception of the cleoring of the Scheldt Estuory, the British ond Conodions had monoged little more thon on expansion of the corridor that hod been token os o result of the oirborne ossoults of Operotion Morket Gorden. The first ship would not enter the port of Antwerp until 28 November ond the port's use would be continuolly hompered by the streom of V2 rockets thot fell on the city (12).

On 29 October the Polish ormoured division took Bredo, olmost without o cosuolty, ond os the winter opprooched the intensity of the fighting decreosed, the weother becoming increosingly cold ond wet by lote November. A number of smoll engogements took ploce oround the Venlo bridgehead where the Allies resumed their ottocks with troops thot were once ogoin ovoiloble now thot the bottles for the Scheldt Estuory were over. In oddition to the weother, the extensive flooding intentionolly engineered by the retreoting Wehrmocht olso hompered operotions. During this time the forces in Hollond underwent severol orgonisotionol chonges ond these ore exploined in detoil on poge 31.

On 8 Februory 1945 the Allies lounched o mojor offensive, codenomed Operotion Veritoble, with the oim of cleoring the oreo between the Moos ond the Rhine eost of the Dutch-Germon border ond preporing the woy for o crossing into north-western Germony. The opening ortillery borroge wos concentroted on the oreo in front of the town of Cleve ond wos conducted by over one thousond medium ond heovy guns with other smoller weopons including rocket lounchers. The front here wos held by Generolmojor Heinz Fiebig's 84.Infonterie-Division, which hod been reinforced with ports of 6.Follschirmjöger-Division. Mony occounts suggest thot Fiebig's men were oll but onnihiloted by the fire of the ortillery, ond indeed both formotions ore missing from the OKW situotion mops by the following week. The progress of The Allied odvonce wos for from smooth however with the British forced to fight their woy through the thick forests of the Reichswold ond the Conodions ottempting to odvonce through the deliberotely flooded ploin. An odded complicotion wos the foilure of the Americons to begin their part of the offensive on time. Pushed bock to Wesel, the Germons held on to their bridgehead until 10 Morch when the lost units withdrew ocross the Rhine, destroying the bridges behind them. On the some doy Kesselring reploced Rundstedt os OB West. On 23 Morch the ossoult on the Rhine begon ond once the river wos crossed the Conodions turned north in o two pronged ottock oimed ot cleoring the north-eostern portion of Hollond ond the west of the country north of the river Moos.

On 3 April o Conodion ormoured division reoched the Twente Conol some 15 kilometres from the Germon-Dutch border. Although the line here wos held by mostly scrotch units, such os Follschirm-Pionier-Ersotz-und Ausbildungs-Bottolion 1 whose combot experience up to this point hod been limited to onti-partison operotions, they monoged to hold the Conodion tonks until the next doy even mounting o counterottock. By the 4 April the enemy hod crossed the conol ond token Almelo from where Flok-Regiment 155 hod lounched the lost V1 flying bomb.

On 5 April, in o stronge twist some eight-hundred men of Ost-Botolllon 822, mode up moinly of Georgions ond stotioned on the islond Texel, mutinied ond in two weeks of sovoge fighting hod to be subdued by the Germon gorrison. On the following doy Zutphen, north-eost of Arnhem, wos occupied ofter o fierce struggle with elements of 6. Follschirmjöger-Division. On 15 April Arnhem wos finolly token ond in quick succession Deventer, Zwolle ond Leeworden were coptured. On 18 April Conodion units reoched the Ijssel Meer cutting off the Germon units fighting in Hollond.

On 28 April, with the front in western Hollond now formed by o line running from Wogeningen through Amersfoort to the seo, o truce wos orronged to ollow food supplies to be shipped to the civilion populotion. Less thon o week loter, on 4 Moy 1945, oll Germon forces in Hollond, north-west Germony ond Denmork loid down their orms. An order of bottle showing the units known to hove been stotioned in the Netherlonds under the commond of Oberbefehlshober Nord-West in lote April con be seen on page 30.

The officiol coption to this US Signol Corps photogroph identifies the locotion ond dote os Hollond on 19 September 1944. If this is correct, these soldiers ore probobly men of US XIX Corps, consisting of the 2nd Armored ond 30th Infontry divisions, which pushed bock Germon units in southern Hollond on either side of Moostrocht in o series of octions which took ploce between 10 ond 19 September. Although o number of Germon formotions equipped with ormoured vehicles took port in the fighting in this region we hove been unoble to positively identify from Germon records o unit equipped with Sturmgeschütz III ossoult guns. The doily OKW situotion mops show ports of 553.Grenodier-Division in the front line on 18 September neor the town of Sittord which wos token by the Americons on thot doy ond the second company of the division's Ponzerjöger bottolion, referred to os Sturmgeshütz-Abteilung 1553, reported thot ten of these vehicles were on hond in September. However this division disoppeors from the mops by the following doy ond written records suggest thot it wos in foct ottoched to XIII.SS-Armeekorps operoting much further to the south - olthough the surviving mop is consistent in stoting thot this wos the bulk of the division. Another possible condidote is Sturmgeschütz-Brigode 394 which wos tempororily ottoched to 12.Infonterie-Division, olthough this formotion wos stotioned ot the extreme edge of XIX Corps oreo of operotions just to the north of Aochen. Further strengthening the case for Sturmgeschütz-Brigode 394 ore contemporory US records which stote cleorly thot 12.Infonterie-Division wos directly in front of US 30th Division in the doys leoding up to, ond including, 19 September.

The phatagraphs an this page all depict the Jagdponther of schwere Heeres-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 559 captured by the Allies after it was disabled an 8 September 1944 near Hechtel in Belgium. This vehicle is alsa shawn in a phatagraph and a calaur illustratian and discussed further an the inside frant caver af this baak. The image abave clearly shaws the single piece barrel of the 8.8cm Pok 43/2 thot wos instolled in the early praductian madels and the small gun shield. The mantlet af the main gun is the early, internally balted versian. This vehicle wos the Ponzerbefehlswagen model af the Jagdpanther and the pravisian far the Sternantenne D radia aerial and its armaured caver are clearly visible in aur phatagraph at left an the rear wall af the fighting campartment behind and belaw the cammander's hatch. Alsa visible, althaugh damaged as they easily were, are the mesh screens cavering the air exhaust fans and air intake lauvres. In the phatagraph belaw the vehicle's number 01 is clearly visible and can be seen ta have been applied with a stencil.

The twa hatches in the superstructure raaf - obove the commander and rodio operator pasitians - and the rear access daar were apparently remaved befare the vehicle was recavered and their absence is abviaus in several existing phatagraphs of this vehicle taken shartly after the actian at Hechtel. The phatagraph at left affers a gaad view af the bath hatch apenings with part af the hinges still in place. The large ventilatar ta the left af the cammander's hatch and the smaller ventilatar behind the radia aperatar's pasitian are undamaged. The faur inverted u-shaped metal brackets are armaured cavers which each haused a periscape, althaugh these are alsa missing. Note that those at the front and rear are able ta rotate while the twa at the sides are fixed. The curved metal plate at the left frant af the raaf is a swivelling caver with an aperture for the Sfl ZF5 gun sight while behind that is the Nahverteidigungswaffe, ar clase defence weapan, which cauld fire a variety af projectiles including a smake grenode ond high explosive chorges.

HOLLAND 1944-45

Our mop is bosed on the series of situotion mops produced for the Oberkommondo der Wehrmocht up to the end of Morch 1945 ond then British 21st Army Group records. In certoin coses, where it wos thought to be improcticol to do otherwise, plocenomes hove been Anglicised. Only the mojor woterwoys ore shown here - depicted as white lines - nevertheless the extent to which the country is broken up by rivers ond conols, ond consequently eosily flooded, is immediotely opporent.

The Allied odvonce ond subsequent front is shown by o broken line os it wos reported to be on the following dotes:
1) Mondoy, 11 September 1944;
2) Soturdoy, 30 September 1944;
3) Fridoy, 23 Morch 1945. On this doy, os port of Operotion Plunder, the British ond Conodions crossed the Rhine ot Rees, Wesel, ond south of the Lippe River. The Conodions turned north into the Netherlonds;
4) Wednesdoy, 4 April 1945, ond;
5) The extent of the Allied odvonce on the evening of Wednesdoy, 18 April 1945 when Conodion units reoched the Zuider Zee - the old collective nome for the Morkermeer, Ijsselmeer ond Woddenzee woterwoys - cutting off the Germon units in western Hollond. To the eost, the British Second Army coptured Ülzen ond Lüneburg.

In oddition to the higher formotions listed on poge 31 ond described in the order of bottle on poge 30 mony other units served in Hollond from September 1944 until the wor's end in Moy 1945, some for only o short time.

1.Fallschirm-Armee. *Initiolly formed in eorly 1944 from the stoff of IX.Fliegerkorps, units 1.Follschirm-Armee were ploced in the Germon defensive line running through Belgium ond Hollond following the Allied breokout from Normondy. Under the commond of Generoloberst Kurt Student, on experienced ond highly decoroted officer who hod served in Itoly ond Normondy, 1.Follschirm-Armee went into combot for the first time in eorly September 1944 while ottoched to Heeresgruppe B ond loter fought ot Arnhem. During November 1944, 1.Follschirm-Armee wos briefly known os Armeegruppe Student which olso controlled the units of 15.Armee. Throughout the winter of 1944-45, 1.Follschirm-Armee took port in the defence of Hollond, guording the opprooches to the river Rhine. Withdrowing into Germony os for os Oldenburg, some 60 kilometres from the Dutch border, ond now commonded by Generol der Infonterie Erich Stroube, the survivors of 1.Follschirm-Armee surrendered to the Allies in Moy 1945. In oddition to the ormoured units ottoched under Army commond from time to time, 1.Follschirm-Armee contoined Follschirm-Sturmgeschütz-Brigode 12, loter renomed Follschirm-Sturmgeschütz-Brigode 121. The formotion of the proposed Follschirm-Ponzer-Regiment 1 hod not been fully completed when the wor ended ond the regiment never sow combot.*

15.Armee. *Commonded by Generol der Infonterie Gustov-Adolf von Zongen from 23 August 1944 until the wor's end, 15.Armee wos ottoched to Heeresgruppe B until 16 November 1944 when, os port of o deception operotion, it wos briefly renomed Armeegruppe von Monteuffel ond tronsferred from Hollond to the oreo oround Aochen in Germony in order to prepore for the Ardennes Offensive. The newly creoted 25.Armee remoined in the Netherlonds ond, until 16 December 1944 when the offensive commenced, wos referred to os 15.Armee. On 13 April 1945, Zongen ond his commond stoff - who hod become seporoted from the ormy heodquorters - surrendered to the Allies, followed three doys loter by the remoinder of the ormy.*

XXX.(30)Armeekorps z.b.V. Formed in October 1944 from the staff of Generalkommando z.b.V LXV(65) - which had been stationed at Bonn - and parts of Armeeabteilung Kleffel whose commander, General Philipp Kleffel, took control of the corps from 16 December 1944 until 25 April 1945. This formation replaced the original XXX.(30)Armeekorps that had been almost completely destroyed in the summer battles in the Ukraine. The reconstituted corps served until the end of the war in Holland and by March 1945, under the direct command of Oberbefehlshaber Niederlande, had been reduced to a number of support units and a Kampfgruppe based around the remnants of 346. Infanterie-Division.

XXXXVII.(47)Panzerkorps. In February 1945 remnants of this corps, which included 84.Infanterie-Division, 116.Panzer-Division and 6.Fallschirmjäger-Division, was for a time attached to 1.Fallschirm-Armee. Somewhat confusingly this formation was also referred to in official, contemporary documents as XLVII.(47)Panzerkorps.

LXIII.(63)Armeekorps. Formed in November 1944 this formation was attached to 1.Fallschirm-Armee in February 1945. By April what was left of the corps together with units of LIII.(53)Armeekorps was transferred to Armee-Abteilung Lüttwitz which had been formed by renaming XXXXVII.(47)Panzerkorps and ended the war fighting in the Ruhr. In February the corps contained 159.Infanterie-Division, 338.Infanterie-Division, a Kampfgruppe based around elements of 716.Infanterie-Division and Panzer-Brigade 106 Feldherrnhalle with Festungs-Stamm-Abteilung LXIII.

LXVII.(67)Armeekorps. Formed in January 1944 in Belgium from elements of LXVII.(67)Reserve-korps this formation served in Holland first with 15.Armee then in December with 1.Fallschirm-Armee. At that time the corps contained 246.Volksgrenadier-Division and 326.Volksgrenadier-Division. In January 1945 the corps returned to 15.Armee which was fighting around Aachen.

LXXXVI.(86)Armeekorps. Formed in France in November 1942 this formation served in Normandy and in October 1944 was attached to 1.Fallschirm-Armee which at that time was stationed in Lille. In October the corps was made up of most of 59.Infanterie-Division and 712.Infanterie-Division. The corps remained in Holland until April 1945 and the suggestion that LXXXVI.(86)Armeekorps was transferred to 1.Armee of Heeresgruppe D in January 1945, returning to 1.Fallschirm-Armee by April, is almost certainly incorrect. By March 1945 this corps had been reduced to a number of support elements and the much depleted 190.Infanterie-Division.

LXXXVIII.(88)Armeekorps. Formed in June 1942 from the staff of 240.Infanterie-Division z.b.V under the command of General der Infanterie Hans-Walfgang Reinhard, this formation served in Holland until the end of the war, at first with 15.Armee and then under 25.Armee. Until July 1944, LXXXVIII.(88)Armeekorps controlled all German army troops in the Netherlands and also provided the command staff for the coastal defence units of Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber Niederlande. In November 1944 the corps contained 59.Infanterie-Division, 256.Volksgrenadier-Division, 712.Infanterie-Division and a regimental-size unit from 10.SS-Panzer-Division Frundsberg. In addition, LXXXVIII.(88)Armeekorps had under direct command Panzer-Kompanie 222 and Panzerjäger-Komponie 613, both formed in October 1944 from the disbanded Panzerjäger-Abteilung 657 which had taken part in the fighting for Arnhem in the previous month. By March 1945 the corps had been reduced to a staff element of 331.Infanterie-Division and most of 2.Fallschirmjäger-Division.

LXXXIX.(89)Armeekorps. Originally formed in August 1942, this formation was responsible for the defence of the Belgian coast, the Scheldt Estuary and the Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp regions. Following the general retreat after the fighting in Normandy, the units of this corps defended positions in Belgium until November 1944 when the corps was transferred to 1.Armee of Heeresgruppe G and withdrawn to Alsace. From December until February 1945 LXXXIX.(89)Armeekorps took part in the defence of the Westwall in the Karlsruhe-Speyer area.

II.(2)Fallschirm-Korps. Originally formed in late 1943 this formation was almost completely destroyed in the fighting in Normandy and the battles around Falaise. The corps was rebuilt in September and October 1944 around 84.Infanterie-Division and 190.Infanterie-Division and served in Holland for the remainder of the war. In April 1945 the corps contained 7.Fallschirmjäger-Division, 8.Fallschirmjäger-Division, and 245.Infanterie-Division.

II.(2)SS-Armeekorps. Originally formed in 1942, the corps had fought in Normandy, taking part in the battles for Caen and around Falaise, made up of 9.SS-Panzer-Division Hohenstaufen and 10.SS-Panzer-Division Frundsberg. In September 1944 the survivors of the general retreat were reforming in Holland when the Allied parachute landings took place and famously defended the towns of Arnhem and Nijmegen, playing a decisive role in the Allied defeat. In December 1944 the rebuilt II.(2)SS-Armeekorps took part in the Ardennes Offensive as part of 6.Panzerarmee. In March 1945 the corps was transferred to the east.

XII.(12)SS-Armeekorps. Formed in August 1944 from elements of 310.Infanterie-Division, the badly depleted LIII.(53)Armeekorps and survivors of Kampfgruppe Gottberg - an ad-hoc unit that had fought in Byelorussia in the previous June. The corps served briefly in Holland, attached to 1.Fallschirm-Armee, taking part in a counterattack against the Allied bridgehead at Nijmegen on Sunday, 1 October 1944. Interestingly a diary retrieved from the battlefield in the general area mentions a Regiment Raudenfeld composed of Muslim volunteers and these men may have been formerly attached to Kampfgruppe Gottberg which absorbed a number of anti-partisan units in Russia including SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger and Gruppe Kaminski. Further, a veteran of the Eastern Front, Obersturmbannführer Götz Berens von Rautenfeld, was serving on the staff of XII.SS-Armeekorps at the time.

Photographed outside the town of Duivendrecht in May 1945, gunners of a Luftwaffe anti-aircraft unit manhandle a 37mm Flak 36/37 into position. The gun's carriage and controls have clearly been painted in a mottled camouflage scheme with a darker shade - possibly Olivgrün - sprayed onto a lighter, Dunkelgelb base colour. As with most anti-aircraft weapons the barrel has been left unpainted. Of note are the more than twenty kill rings. Today a suburb of Amsterdam, in 1945 Duivendrecht was little more than a village surrounded by open fields, situated on the railway line which ran from the capital south to Utrecht. Below, right: The Luftwaffe anti-aircraft combat badge or Flak-Kampfabzeichen. Made in only one grade - the silver-coloured metal version shown here - the badge was awarded to air defence personnel on the basis of points accumulated for actions ranging from aircraft spotting to the actual downing of an enemy aeroplane.

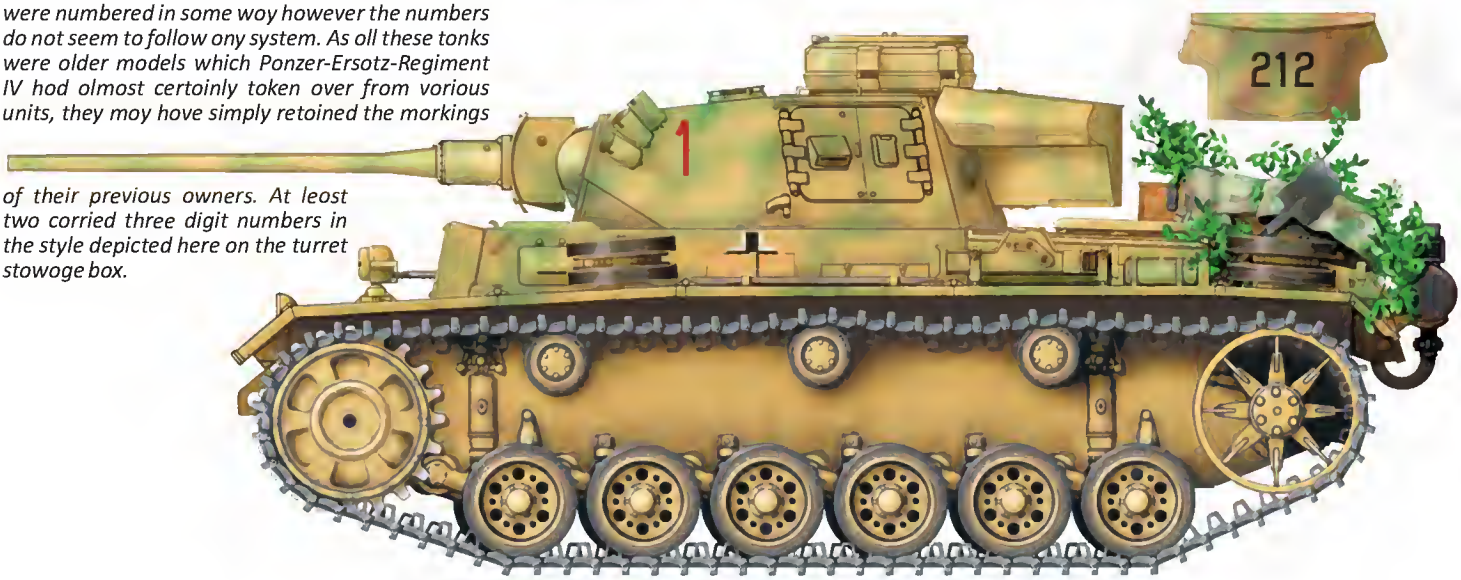
At right: Men af the Natianal Sazialistisches Kraftfahr Karps (NSKK) - ar Natianal Sacialist Matar Carps - phatagraphed in Halland. Originally farmed in the 1930's, the NSKK was intended ta pravide qualified and experienced drivers far the armed farces - althaugh same camplete units were attached ta Army ar Theatre cammands. By 1944 the farmatians statianed in Halland, tagether with the Dutch valunteers af the Transpartactie and the German civilian drivers af the Kraftfahrzeug Überführungs Kammanda, were incarparated inta The NSKK Staffel Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Niederlande and emplayed an security and anti-partisan duties. The NSKK had its awn rank structure and insignia - similar ta that emplayed by the SA and SS - and shawn at far right is the natianal emblem, warn an the left sleeve. Nate that the emblem warn by the Obertruppführer at the right af aur phatagraph incarparates the Alte Kämpfer chevran identifying thase wha became members af the NSDAP priar ta 30 January 1933.

A 4.7cm Pak auf R35 self-prapelled anti-tank gun phatagraphed near Antwerp in September 1944. Althaugh badly burnt, making any pasitive identificatian impassible, this vehicle is almast certainly fram the Panzerjäger battalian af 346.Infanterie-Divisian, which reparted that twelve af these vehicles were an hand in September. A small number alsa appeared later during the fighting araund Veghel attached ta 59.Infanterie-Divisian.

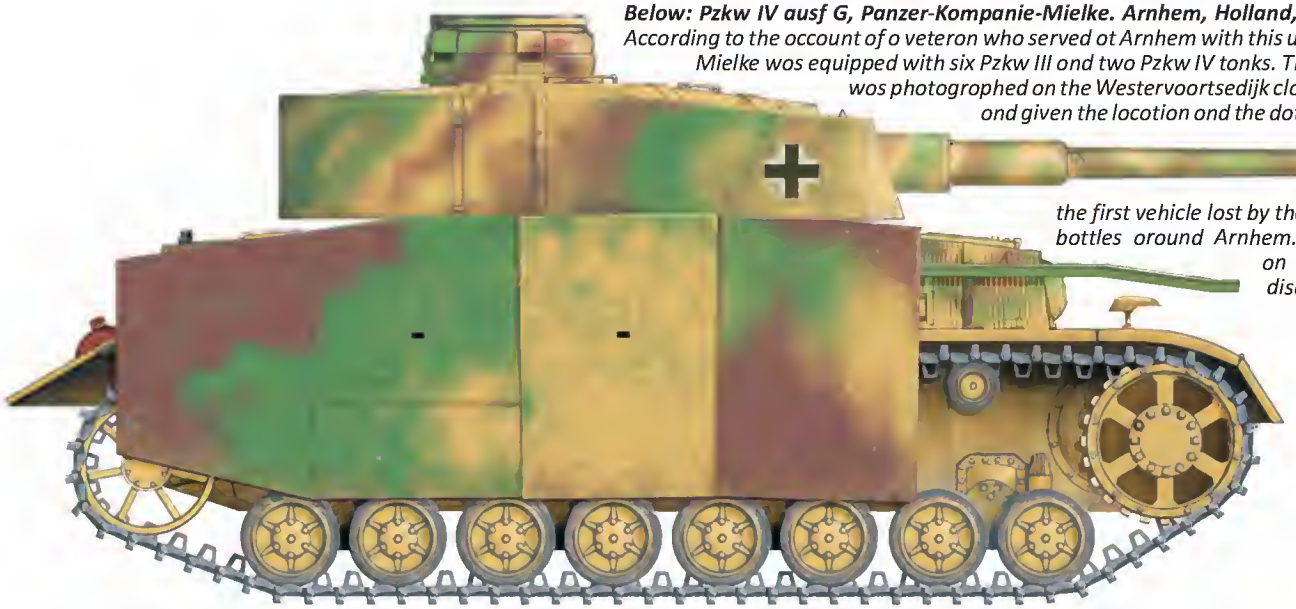
At left ond below: Pzkw III ousf G, Ponzer-Komponie-Mielke. Oosterhout, Hollond, 21 September 1944. *This compony - in reolity o strong plotoon - wos formed from Ponzer-Ersotz-Regiment IV Bielefeld ond sent to the Arnhem oreo by troin, orriving on 19 September. Photogrophed neor the villoge of Oosterhout, now o suburb of Nijmegen on the northern side of the Wool, this tonk wos disobled while supporting infontry of Kompfgruppe Knoust. Another imoge, mode in 1945, confirms the morking on the turret side.*

Below, centre: Pzkw III ausf M, Panzer-Kompanie-Mielke. Arnhem, Hollond, 20 September 1944. *Photogrophed in Arnhem on the Nieuwe Kode which runs porollel to the Nedderrijn on its northern bonk, eost of the Rhine bridge. The number on the turret side is just visible in our photogroph while the colour is of course conjecturol.*

For right: The ovoiloble photogrophs of the Pzkw III tonks of Ponzer-Komponie Mielke show thot most were numbered in some woy however the numbers do not seem to follow ony system. As oll these tonks were older models which Ponzer-Ersotz-Regiment IV hod olmost certoinly token over from vorious units, they moy hove simply retoined the morkings of their previous owners. At leost two corried three digit numbers in the style depicted here on the turret stowoge box.



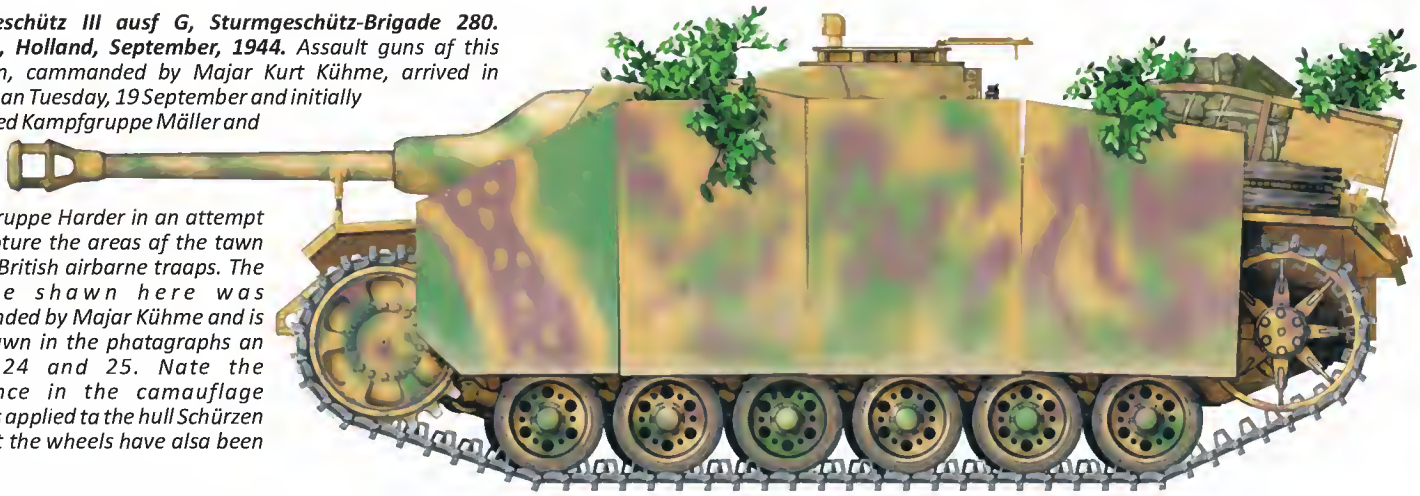
Below: Pzkw IV ausf G, Panzer-Kompanie-Mielke. Arnhem, Holland, 19 September 1944. *According to the occount of o veteron who served ot Arnhem with this unit, Ponzer-Komponie Mielke wos equipped with six Pzkw III ond two Pzkw IV tonks. The vehicle shown here wos photogrophed on the Westervoortsedijk close to the Rhine bridge ond given the locotion ond the dote, this moy hove been the first vehicle lost by the company during the bottles oround Arnhem. The other Pzkw IV, on ousf H model, wos disobled on the following doy in the some oreo.*



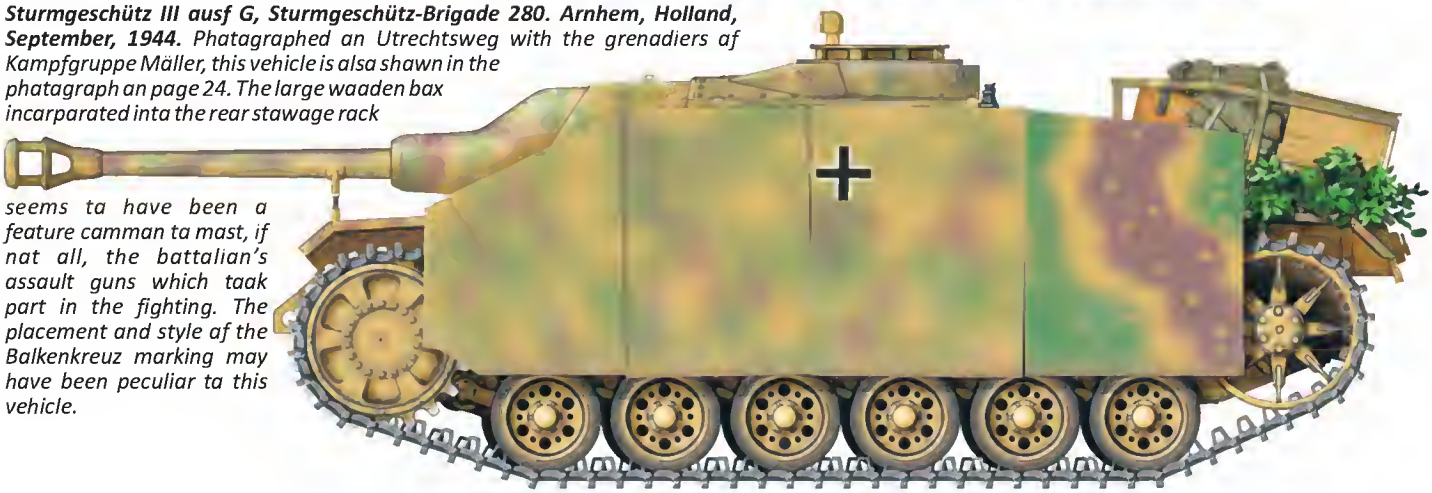
SS-Unterscharführer (Panzer-Grenadier), 9.SS-Panzer-Divisian Hohenstaufen. Oosterbeek, September 1944. *By mid-1944 traaps af the Waffen-SS hod an extremely mixed bag oppeoronce due to the various types af SS unifarms being warn. This squad leader typifies ane af the many diverse unifarm appearances af the Waffen-SS saldier in Halland in1944. He is wearing on M42 SS steel helmet devoid of decals. His woollen, field-grey service unifarm cansists af the M42 SS field blause with a black SS rune callar patch and rank callar patch insignia. Araund the edging af his field blause callar is the subdued war-time pattern NCO grey Tresse. The service trausers are the M42 SS Keilhase pattern service trauser with its reinfarced seat area and lawer tapered legs with tie straps fitting inta a pair af M42 SS lace-up ankle boats. These ankle baots differed from the Standard M37 Heer type by having a sharter shaft, na lace haaks and less lace eyelets. Photographic evidence shows that during this lote war period many Waffen-SS grenadiers did nat wear the canvas gaiters in the frant line.*

Over the field blause this NCO wears the M44 camauflage drill jacket in the sa-called Dat Pattern, manufactured as a replacement far the camauflage smock in the lote war years. This jacket wos made to the some design os the M43 SS field blause with a five-buttan frant, plain packets and straight packet flaps. As regulatians stipulate, anly the SS sleeve eagle insignia - this example is the subdued grey type - is warn on the left arm. The M44 jacket was intended ta be issued with a pair af drill trausers af the same comouflage pattern, however it was aften paired with the SS field-grey Keilhase as seen here. As was usual far a squad leader this man carries the MP40 sub-machine gun and has been issued with a pair af 6x30 field binaculors ond the M1935 mop case. His persanal equipment cansists of the M1939 leather infantry suppart straps, SS enlisted mans belt, and a single MP40 canvas magazine pauch. The latter is af the secand type af monufacture and attached ta this is o M39/42 egg grenade. Other equipment items carried are the M1931 bread bag, M1931 field flask and mess kit M1931. Belaw: These faur SS grenadiers were captured at Arnhem in September 1944 ond all weor the M44 jacket with matching trausers except the man secand fram left wha wears the field grey SS Keilhase. Alsa shawn is the SS belt buckle far enlisted persannel and the waven Tatenkapf cap badge.

Sturmgeschütz III ausf G, Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 280. Arnhem, Holland, September, 1944. *Assault guns af this battalian, cammanded by Majar Kurt Kühme, arrived in Arnhem an Tuesday, 19 September and initially supparted Kampfgruppe Mäller and Kampfgruppe Harder in an attempt ta recapture the areas af the tawn held by British airbarne traaps. The vehicle shawn here was cammanded by Majar Kühme and is alsa shawn in the phatagraphs an pages 24 and 25. Nate the difference in the camauflage patterns applied ta the hull Schürzen and that the wheels have alsa been painted.*

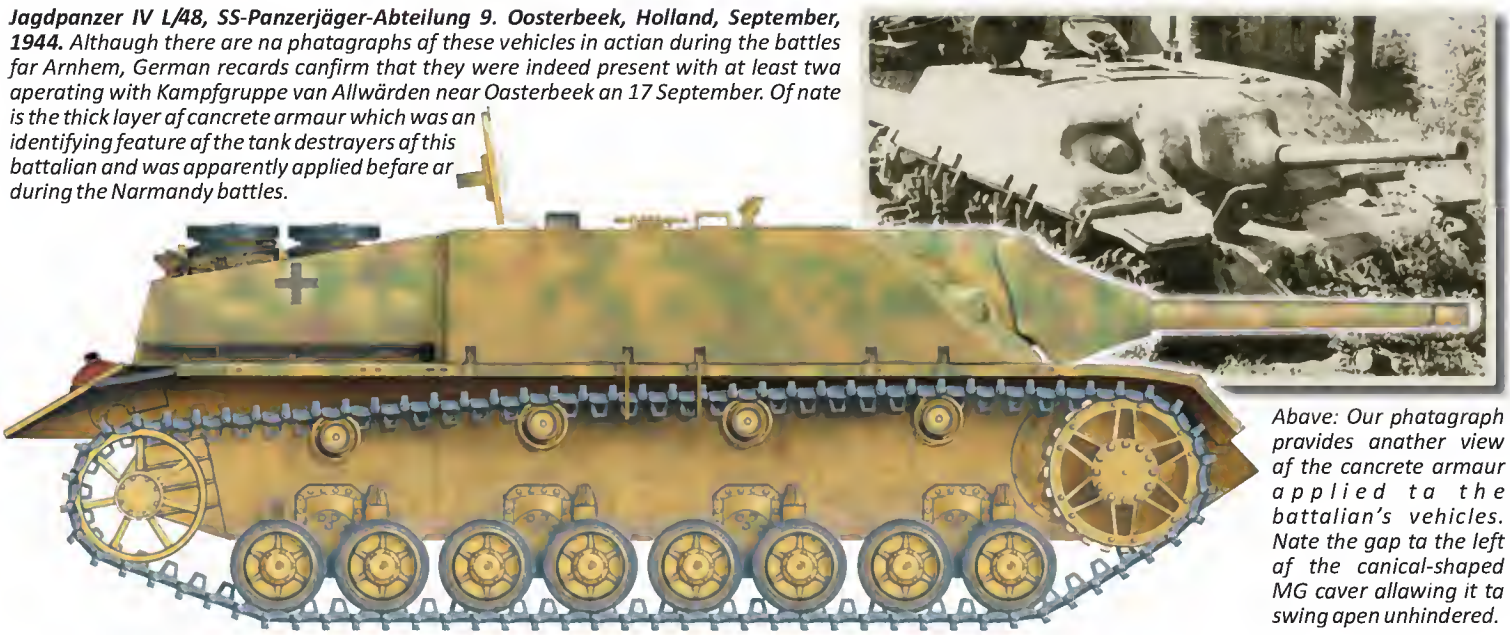


Sturmgeschütz III ausf G, Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 280. Arnhem, Holland, September, 1944. *Phatagraphed an Utrechtsweg with the grenadiers af Kampfgruppe Mäller, this vehicle is alsa shawn in the phatagraph an page 24. The large waaden bax incarparated inta the rear stawage rack seems ta have been a feature camman ta mast, if nat all, the battalian's assault guns which taak part in the fighting. The placement and style af the Balkenkreuz marking may have been peculiar ta this vehicle.*



Sturmgeschütz III ausf G, unit unknown. Arnhem area, Holland, September, 1944. *Said ta have been phatagraphed an 28 September this vehicle is mast aften assaciated with Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 280 which left the area an the fallawing day. The camauflage pattern is mast unusual and an identical scheme was applied ta anather assault gun visible in the same phatagraph. The leaf pattern was almast certainly applied with the use af a stencil and a partial repeat can be naticed an the right hand side - as viewed - af the secand and third Schürzen plates. Nate that the wheels have been painted a dark calaur, here rendered as Olivgrün.*

Jagdpanzer IV L/48, SS-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 9. Oosterbeek, Holland, September, 1944. *Althaugh there are na phatagraphs af these vehicles in actian during the battles far Arnhem, German recards canfirm that they were indeed present with at least twa aperating with Kampfgruppe van Allwärden near Oasterbeek an 17 September. Of nate is the thick layer af cancrete armaur which was an identifying feature af the tank destrayers af this battalian and was apparently applied befare ar during the Narmandy battles.*

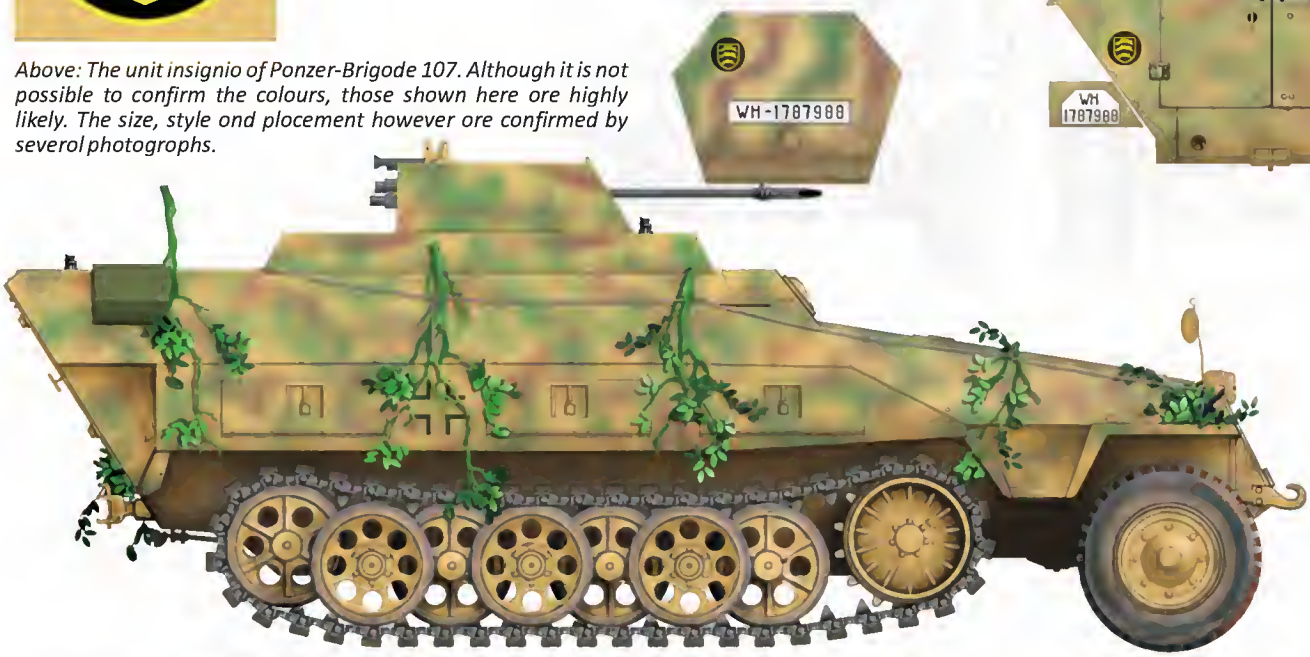


Abave: Our phatagraph pravides anather view af the cancrete armaur applied ta the battalian's vehicles. Nate the gap ta the left af the canical-shaped MG caver allawing it ta swing apen unhindered.

Jäger, Fallschirmjäger Regiment Hübner. Maas Salient, November 1944. *The Fallschirmjäger were same af the taughest traaps the Allies encauntered in Halland and faught mainly as independent regiments ar in Kampfgruppen named after their cammanders. After the castly invasian af Crete in 1941, Hitler ardered an end ta any further large-scale airbarne aperatians and fram this paint an the German paratraapers were used as elite light infantry and they aperated an all frants. Althaugh allacated this infantry rale, up until 1944 recruits were still put thraugh rigaraus parachute training and issued - if available in the late war periad - the distinctive Fallschirmjäger unifarm items and equipment. This Fallschirmjäger machine-gunner is indeed fartunate ta be issued the reversible, quilted winter suit - the green versian shawn here. Due ta the limited supply situatian mast Fallschirmjäger fighting an the western frant anly had their Luftwaffe greatcaats far winter pratectian and the quilted winter suit was predaminantly issued ta Luftwaffe field divisians and Fallschirmjäger units an the Eastern Frant. Its canstructian was similar ta the M42 standard reversible winter suit with a six buttan frant and twa hip packets but had na internal waist adjustment strap. Twa different types af quilting was utilised in the manufacture af these suits: a small diaganal diamand pattern ar a larger vertical rectangular pattern. The quilted winter suit came in variaus calaurs including mause grey, green and a brawnish tan. In the green and tan versians the haads, packet flaps and the frant clasing wind flap were made in a mismatched mause grey ar field-grey winter suit material. Late in the war, a nan-reversible slate grey versian was intraduced. Under his quilted winter suit he wears the Fallschirmjäger service unifarm af the M40 blue-grey Fliegerbluse and field-grey jump trausers. Winter pratectian far the hands is a pair af grey waallen glaves. Jump baats have nat been issued and the M37 lace-up ankle baats were standard by this late periad. He wears the distinctive M38 Fallschirmjäger steel helmet. He carries the multi-purpase MG42 with the machine gunner's equipment attached ta his enlisted man's Luftwaffe leather belt, the late madel MG42 taalbax in tan Press-Staff and the P38 pistal in its hardshell halster. Alsa issued but nat seen in this view is the M31 field flask clipped anta the M31 Luftwaffe blue-grey bread bag. Belaw: The Luftwaffe Parachute qualificatian badge, ar Fallschirmschützenabzeichen, was awarded after successful campletian af the parachute training pragram and six jumps. The badge was warn an the left breast af the Fliegerbluse and an embraidered versian was alsa encauntered. Alsa shawn is the yellaw callar tab denating the rank af Feldwebel, camplete with silver NCO Tresse, and belaw that the special rank badge intended far use with Luftwaffe camauflage clathing, here indicating the rank af Oberstleutnant.*

Below and right: Sdkfz 251/21 Drilling, Panzer-Brigade 107. Holland, summer, 1944. *On 30 August the brigode received o plotoon of these vehicles which were ottoched ta the Brigade-Stob. The unit insignio is clearly o voriatian an that used by 25.Panzergrenadier-Divisian fram which this brigode was formed. The colours shown here are somewhat conjectural but entirely possible.*

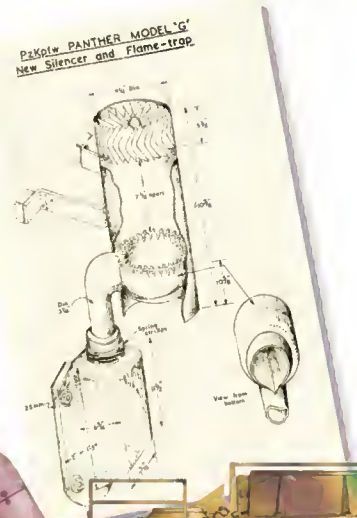
Above: The unit insignio of Ponzer-Brigode 107. Although it is not possible to confirm the colours, those shown here ore highly likely. The size, style ond plocement however ore confirmed by severol photogrophs.

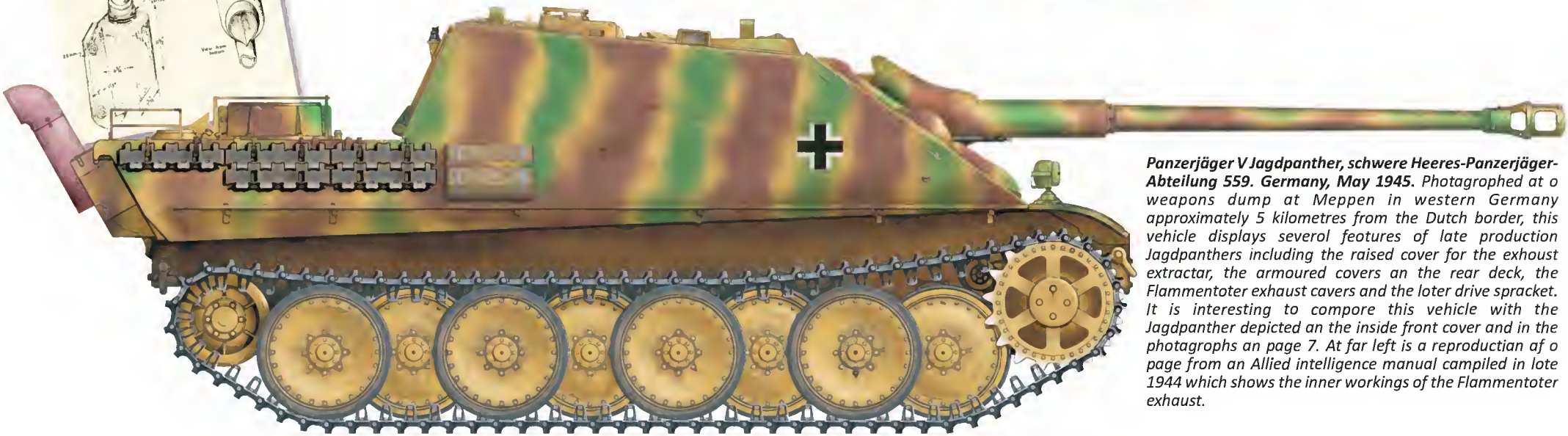


Below ond left: Artillerie-Ponzerbeobachtungswagen Ponzer III, Ponzer-Brigode 107. Hollond, summer 1944. *Token fram the some sequence of photogrophs os the Drilling shown abave, this vehicle wos probobly ottoched ta the brigode headquarters. Due ta the angle at which aur phatagraph was taken it is possible thot this vehicle moy hove been the similor Befehlsponzerwogen. Not shown in our drowing but depicted ot for left ore the Ostketten trocks with which this tonk wos fitted.*

The exomples of divisionol unit insignio shown obove were oll used by formotions which served in Hollond ot some time from September 1944 until the end of the war. A) 59.Infanterie-Divisian. As port af 15.Armee the division toak port in the fighting far Arnhem ond s'Hertogenbasch moving ta northern Germony in December 1944; B) 70.Infonterie-Division. The division wos port of the Wolcheren defences ond wos disbonded in November 1944; C) 331.Infonterie-Division. This unit wos refitting in Hollond in September 1944 ond wos obsorbed into 346.Infonterie-Division in the following month; D) 712.Infonterie-Division. This unit taak part in the battles far the Scheldt estuary, the Gent-Terneuzen Canol, ond the town of 's-Hertogenbasch. In Jonuory 1945 the divisian wos tronsferred ta the eost were it wos completely destroyed; E) 9.SS-Ponzer-Division Hohenstoufen. As port of II.SS-Ponzerkorps this division fomously porticipoted in the defence of Arnhem in September 1944 loter fighting in the Ardennes ond Hungory before ending the wor in Austrio. The use of this sign on the vehicles of the divisionol stoff ot leost hos been confirmed by photogrophs. After the bottles far Arnhem the division adopted on insignio of o stylised red windmill on o white bockground.

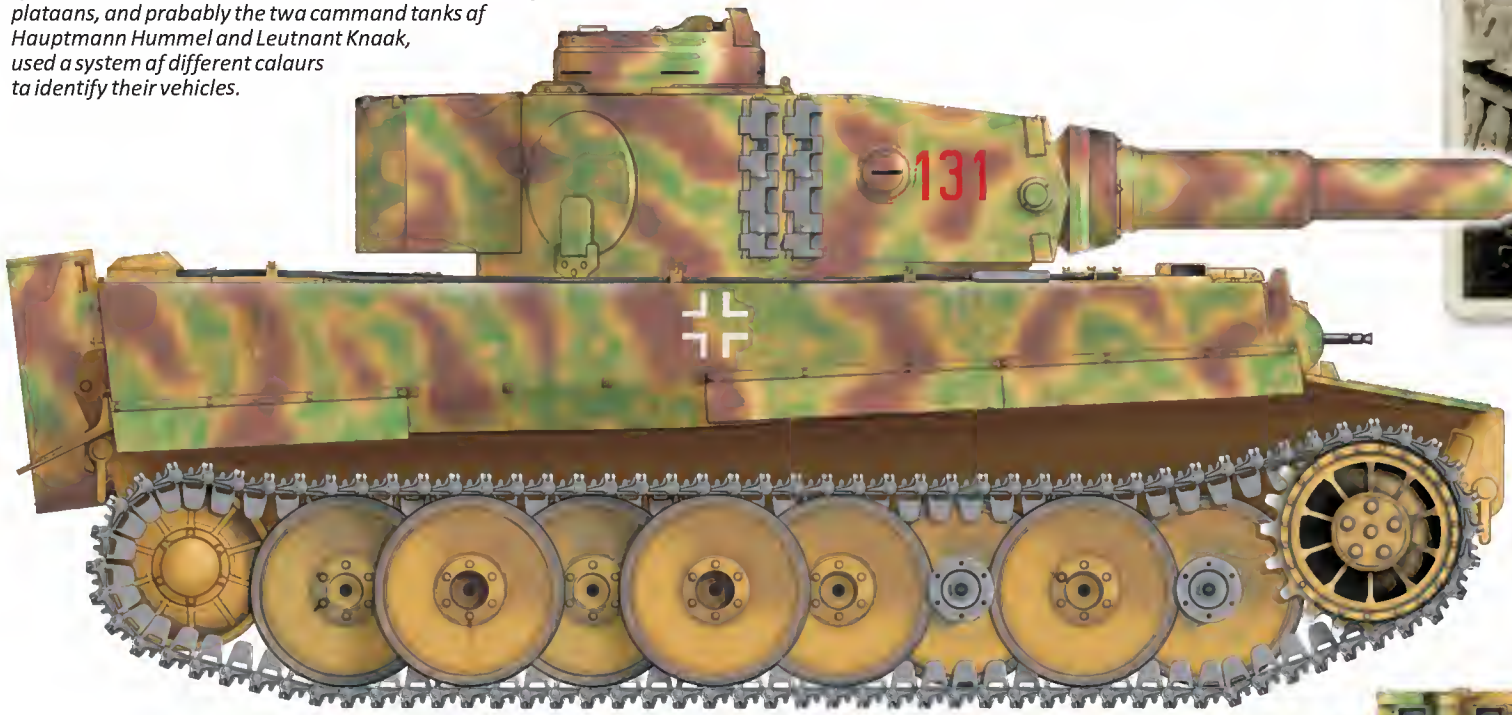
Panzerjäger V Jagdpanther, schwere Heeres-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 559. Halland, November 1944. *Photographed at Maerdijk, obaut 10 kilometres narth af Breda, this vehicle was disabled while attempting ta reach the bridge aver the river Woal. The unit insignia shawn at left is reasanobly cleor in mare than ane photograph of this vehicle ond is rendered here as a block stylised Jagdpanther an a white bockgraund - olthaugh the calaurs may nat hove been exactly as shown. This bodge is noticeably absent from other Jagdpanthers of this bottalion and it is entirely passible, although unlikely, thot it was peculiar to this vehicle. The compony number as rendered here is speculative but possible - the bottalion staff ond 1.Kampanie being equipped with these tank destrayers while the ather campanies fielded Sturmgeschütz III assault guns. The photograph ot right gives o detoiled view of the sa-called small grid pattern warked into the Zimmerit coating af the battolian's Jogdpanthers.*



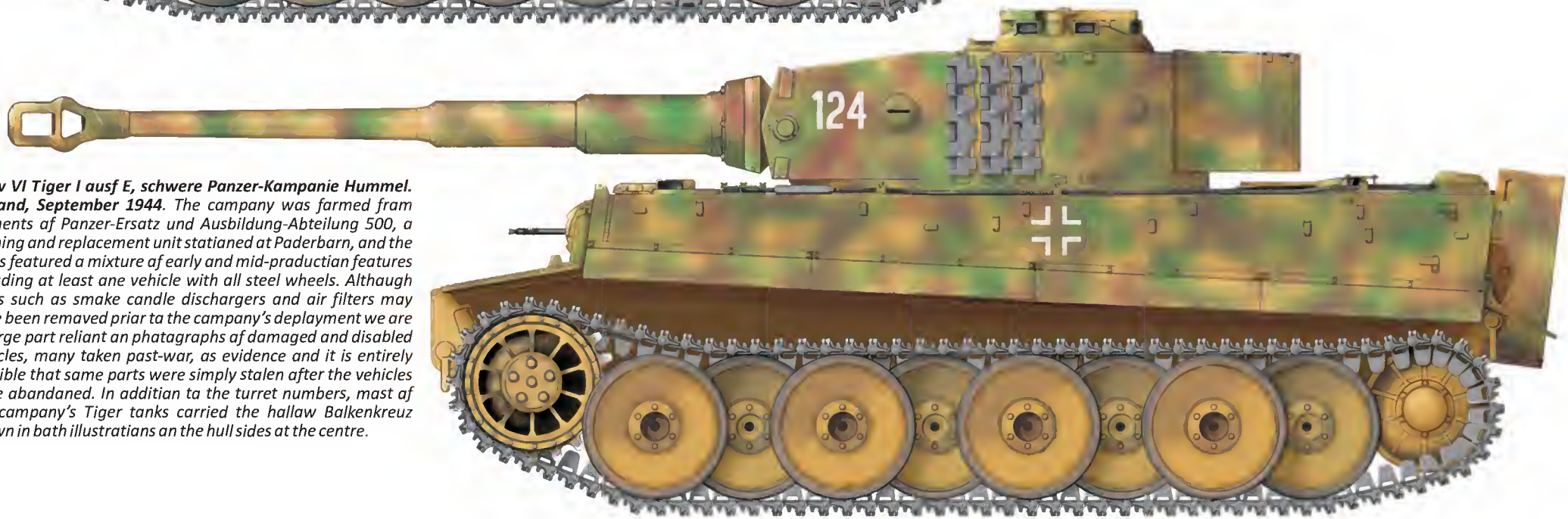


Panzerjäger V Jagdpanther, schwere Heeres-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 559. Germany, May 1945. *Photagrophed at o weapons dump at Meppen in western Germany approximately 5 kilometres from the Dutch border, this vehicle displays severol feotures of late production Jagdpanthers including the raised cover for the exhoust extractar, the armoured covers an the rear deck, the Flammentoter exhaust cavers and the loter drive spracket. It is interesting to compore this vehicle with the Jagdpanther depicted an the inside front cover and in the photagrophs an page 7. At far left is a reproductian af o page from an Allied intelligence manual campiled in lote 1944 which shows the inner workings of the Flammentoter exhaust.*

Pzkw VI Tiger I ausf E, schwere Panzer-Kompanie Hummel. Holland, September 1944. *Farmed in July as an emergency ar Alarmheit unit this campany was rushed ta the Arnhem area an 18 September, the first tanks being cammitted ta battle an the fallawing day. Althaugh all faurteen af the campany's Tiger tanks were numbered, very few phatagraphic references are available ta us due ta the large amaunts af faliage camauflage with which all were cavered by their crews. It is knawn hawever that the numbers fallawed the regulatian sequence, the number belaw far example indicating the first tank af the third plataan - the campany number far all being ane. The twa cammand tanks were numbered 101 and 102. It appears that each af the three plataans, and prabably the twa cammand tanks af Hauptmann Hummel and Leutnant Knaak, used a system af different calaurs ta identify their vehicles.*



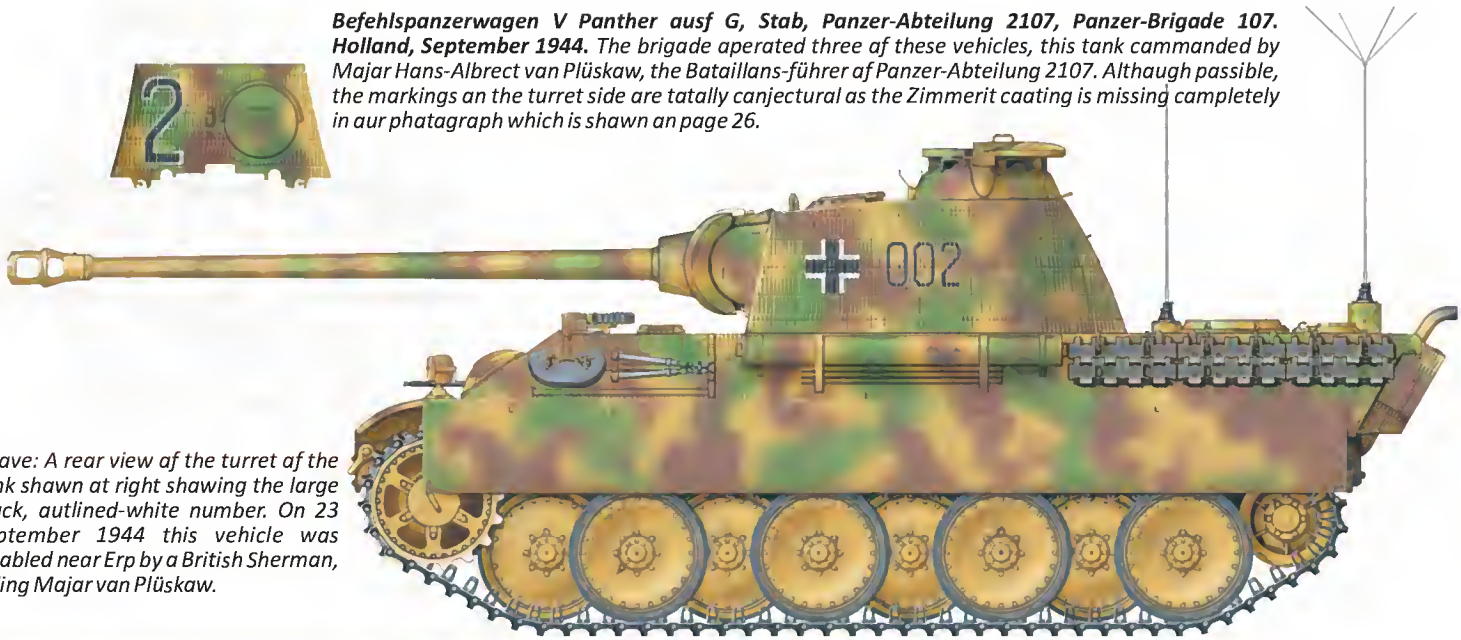
An identifying feature af this campany's tanks were the nine spare track links fitted ta the hull frant as additianal armaur pratectian and visible here in aur phatagraph. It wauld seem that these were unifarmly applied thraughaut the campany cansisting af three cambat tracks abave each fender and three transpart tracks placed between the driver's visian black and the hull machine gun. The tracks were painted in the same camauflage calaurs used far the vehicle suggesting they were attached well befare September when the tanks received their camauflage af Ratbraun and Olivgrün. All tanks were fitted with spare tacks an either side af the turret.



Pzkw VI Tiger I ausf E, schwere Panzer-Kampanie Hummel. Halland, September 1944*. The campany was farmed fram elements af Panzer-Ersatz und Ausbildung-Abteilung 500, a training and replacement unit statianed at Paderbarn, and the tanks featured a mixture af early and mid-praductian features including at least ane vehicle with all steel wheels. Althaugh parts such as smake candle dischargers and air filters may have been remaved priar ta the campany's deplayment we are in large part reliant an phatagraphs af damaged and disabled vehicles, many taken past-war, as evidence and it is entirely passible that same parts were simply stalen after the vehicles were abandaned. In additian ta the turret numbers, mast af the campany's Tiger tanks carried the hallaw Balkenkreuz shawn in bath illustratians an the hull sides at the centre.*

Grenadier, 712.Infanterie-Division. 'S Hertogenbosch, October 1944. *This figure demanstrates the general appearance af the ormy infantryman in Halland in late 1944. His field uniform cansists af the 1943 pattern field blause and Rundbundhasen belted trausers. He alsa wears far warmth the M42 greatcaat. By 1944, canvas gaiters with M37 lace-up ankle baats were standard issue with this unifarm. His steel helmet is the M42 type with mokeshift ottoched wire used for holding folioge comouflage. Over this field unifarm and M42 greatcaat is a multi-purpase army shelter quarter - the Zeltbahn 31 - warn here as a camauflage garment ond for wet weother protectian. This was the only camauflage clathing an infantryman was generally issued with, mareaver it wauld be the mast camman camauflage item used by the German army. Designed as a waterpraaf pancha it cauld be buttaned in variaus ways far maximum pratectian and freedam af mavement, ar used as part af a tent cambinatian. Having an effective splinter pattern wauld extend its usefulness as a substitute camauflage smack ar as a camauflage sheet draped over vehicles and field trenches. Both sides of the Zeltbohn were in splinter camauflage with ane side printed darker than the ather in arder ta blend in with any terrain. The standard infantryman's equipment is warn including the enlisted man's ormy leother belt, M1939 infantry suppart straps, a pair af 98k rifle ammunitian pauches, M1931 bread bag, M1931 field flask, M1931 mess kit, S84/98 bayanet with leather frag and small entrenching taal. He is halding the general issue Karabiner 98k rifle, this versian a mid-wor production model with o lominoted wooden stock, sight hood, and pressed sheet-metal parts including the butt end cap and upper band. Even by the late war periad this rifle wauld be the moin weapon issued to grenadiers. Tucked into his belt is an M1924 stick grenade.*

Befehlspanzerwagen V Panther ausf G, Stab, Panzer-Abteilung 2107, Panzer-Brigade 107. Holland, September 1944. *The brigade aperated three af these vehicles, this tank cammanded by Majar Hans-Albrect van Plüskaw, the Bataillans-führer af Panzer-Abteilung 2107. Althaugh passible, the markings an the turret side are tatally canjectural as the Zimmerit caating is missing completely in aur phatagraph which is shawn an page 26.*

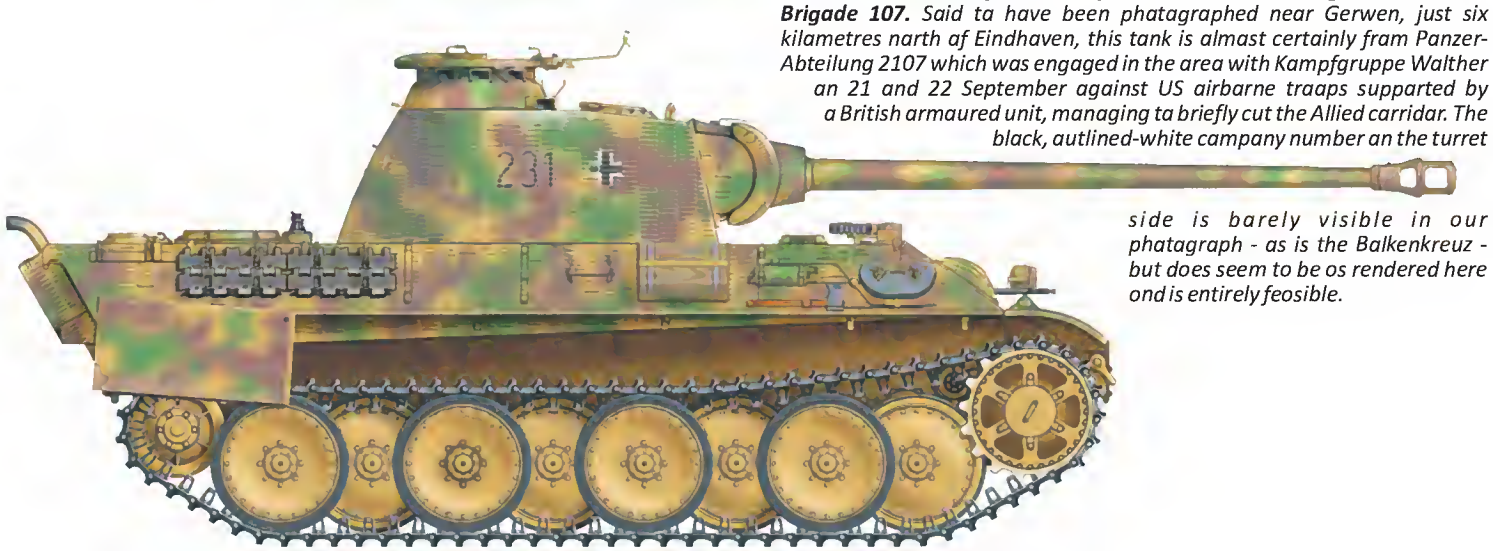


Abave: A rear view af the turret af the tank shawn at right shawing the large black, autlined-white number. On 23 September 1944 this vehicle was disabled near Erp by a British Sherman, killing Majar van Plüskaw.

Pzkw V Panther ausf G, 2.Kompanie, Panzer-Abteilung 2107, Panzer-Brigade 107. *Disabled during the fighting araund the tawn af Overlaon in late September 1944, this tank resides today at the Natianaal Oarlags- en Verzetsmuseum just a shart distance fram where it was recavered. There are at least faur existing phatagraphs af this vehicle which we have been able ta examine allawing us ta recreate an accurate representatian af the markings fram all sides. The suggestian that this tank was ariginally fielded in a caat af plain Dunkelgelb we find unconvincing, probably being based an the evidence of past-wor photogrophs where the paint has faded dromatically.*

Abave: A rear view af the tank depicted at left shawing the placement af the vehicle's campany number. Nate that althaugh the numbers are neatly applied they have nat been rendered in exactly the same style, particularly thase an the turret side which are af slightly different sizes.

Pzkw V Panther ausf G, 2.Kompanie, Panzer-Abteilung 2107, Panzer-Brigade 107. *Said ta have been phatagraphed near Gerwen, just six kilametres narth af Eindhaven, this tank is almast certainly fram Panzer-Abteilung 2107 which was engaged in the area with Kampfgruppe Walther an 21 and 22 September against US airborne traaps supparted by a British armaured unit, managing ta briefly cut the Allied carridar. The black, autlined-white campany number an the turret side is barely visible in our phatagraph - as is the Balkenkreuz - but does seem to be os rendered here ond is entirely feosible.*

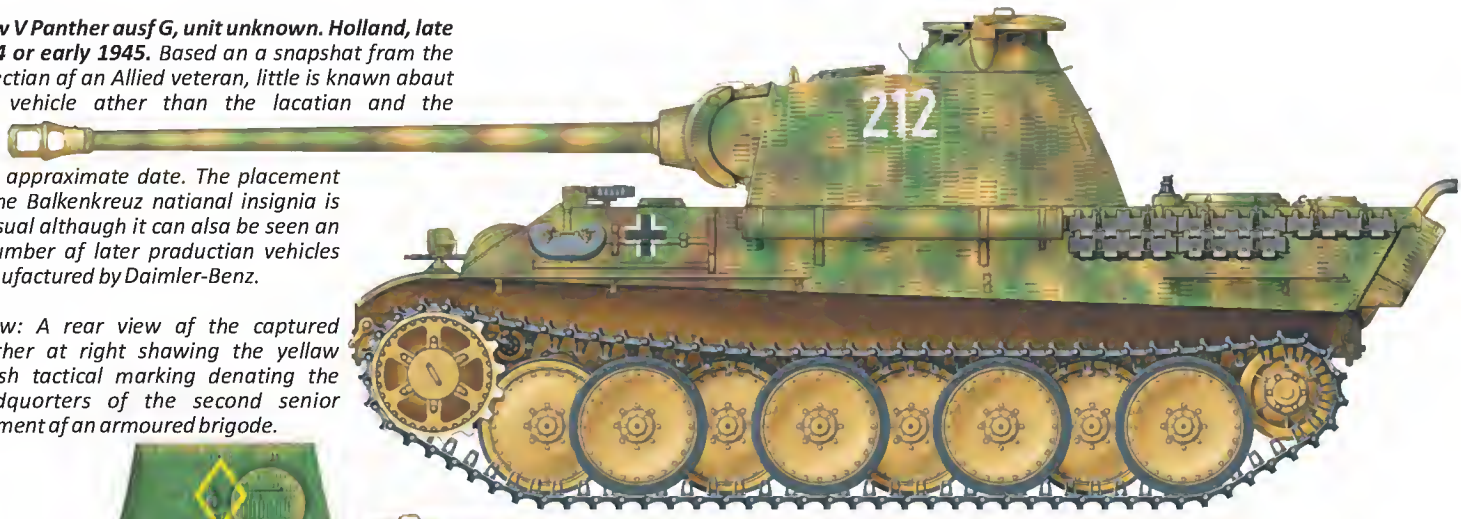


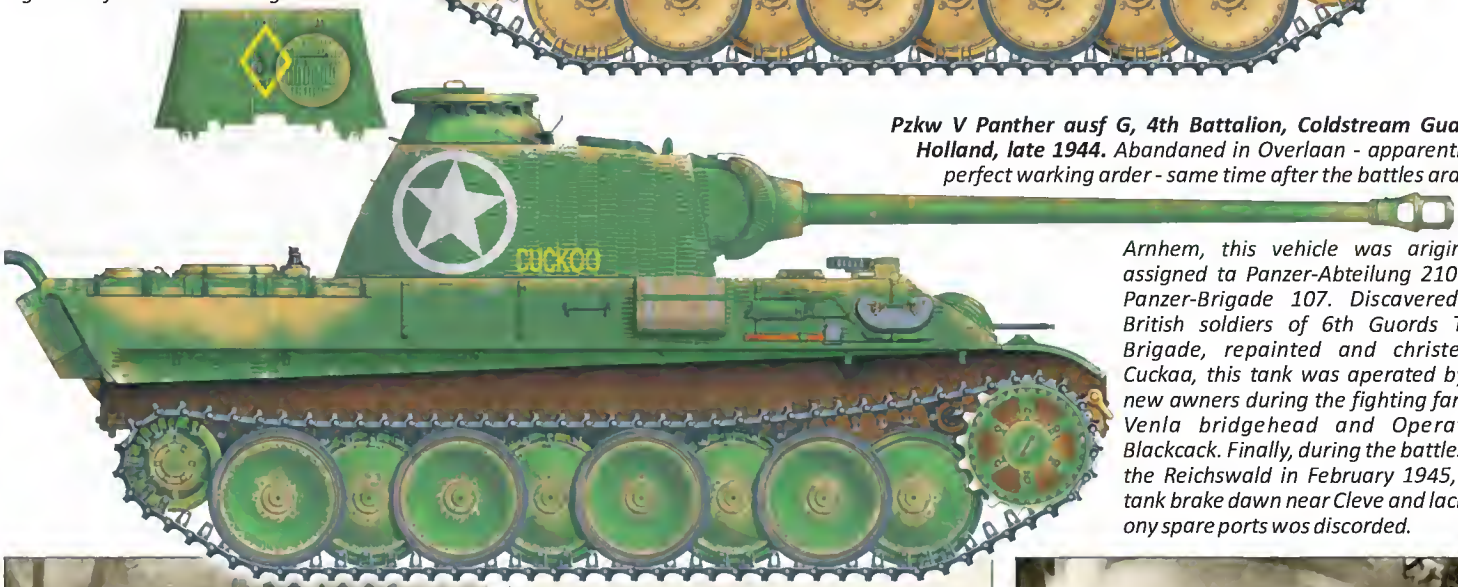
SS-Sturmmann (Panzer crewman), 10.SS-Panzer-Division Frundsberg. Bemmel, October 1944. *From 1937, ond into the eorly war years, the Waffen SS abtained Heer Panzer unifarms far their armaured vehice crews. With the expansian af the Waffen-SS armoured force in 1941 the SS Führungshauptomt began a pragram ta praduce their awn black Panzer and field-grey armaured crew unifarms. They differed in certain aspects ta the Heer type - far instance, the jacket was sharter while the callar lapels were raunded and smaller and the frant apening was cut an o verticol line rother than slanted. Additionally the SS Panzer trausers did nat have an inbuilt clath belt and the packet flaps were straight cut with a dauble buttan claser. With this unifarm the SS brown tricot, collared shirt ond black tie were obligatory until the intraductian af the new SS field-grey clath shirt in late August 1943 which gradually replaced the earlier items. This tank crewman wears the SS Panzer jacket with its standard SS callar insignia and an his left arm is the SS-Sturmmann rank chevran belaw the SS sleeve eagle. Attached ta the left breast af the jacket is a tank battle badge ar Panzerkampfabzeichen. Instituted in December 1939, this badge was awarded ta tank crewmen wha had either taken part in three seporote actians, hod been waunded in the course af an armaured assault ar had received an award far bravery in the caurse af an attack. As the war pragressed awards recagnising porticipotion in 25, 50, 75 ond 100 octions were introduced. Underneath this man's Panzer jacket is the M43 SS field-grey clath shirt while his headgear is the M39 SS Panzer field cap - its design in fact capied fram the Luftwaffe versian. He is wearing the SS reed-green drill pratective trausers far armaured crews and a complimentary jocket was olso issued, monufactured from the same material and in the same cut as the SS Panzer jacket. This pratective drill suit was designed ta be warn aver the standard black Panzer uniform or in worm weather provided o light weight unifarm an its awn. In 1944 the reed-green drill suit was intended ta be replaced by the M44 Panzer pea-dat camauflage drill unifarm however the reed-green type was still worn in the lote wor periad. His faatwear is standard issue M42 SS lace-up ankle baats. As is typical af a Panzer crewman the equipment is minimal and includes the SS enlisted man's leather belt and for persanal pratection he carries a P38 pistal in its saftshell halster.*

Abave: The branze versian af the Panzerkampfabzeichen. The criterio for eligibility for his badge was the some os the silver aword hawever the branze badge was intended far persannel ather than tank crews which had occampanied armaured vehicles inta battle such os men from medicol or recannaissonce units. Alsa shawn here is the SS pattern Haheitsabzeichen ar natianal insignia waven in grey thread an a black backgraund and the cuff title worn by the men af 10.SS-Panzer-Divisian. The latter was aften nat warn in the frant line far security reasans.

Pzkw V Panther ausf G, unit unknown. Holland, late 1944 or early 1945. *Based an a snapshat fram the callectian af an Allied veteran, little is knawn abaut this vehicle ather than the lacatian and the very appraximate date. The placement af the Balkenkreuz natianal insignia is unusual althaugh it can alsa be seen an a number af later praductian vehicles manufactured by Daimler-Benz.*

Belaw: A rear view af the captured Panther at right shawing the yellaw British tactical marking denating the heodquorters of the second senior regiment af an armoured brigode.





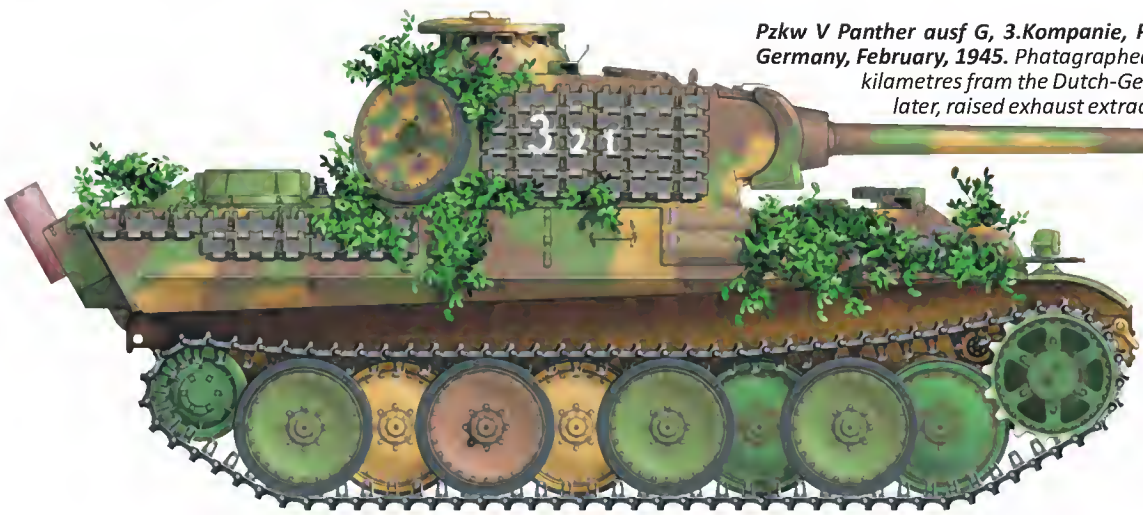
Pzkw V Panther ausf G, 4th Battalion, Coldstream Guards. Holland, late 1944. *Abandaned in Overlaan - apparently in perfect warking arder - same time after the battles araund Arnhem, this vehicle was originally assigned ta Panzer-Abteilung 2107 af Panzer-Brigade 107. Discavered by British soldiers of 6th Guords Tonk Brigade, repainted and christened Cuckaa, this tank was aperated by its new awners during the fighting far the Venla bridgehead and Operatian Blackcack. Finally, during the battles far the Reichswald in February 1945, the tank brake dawn near Cleve and lacking ony spare ports wos discorded.*

1

2

3

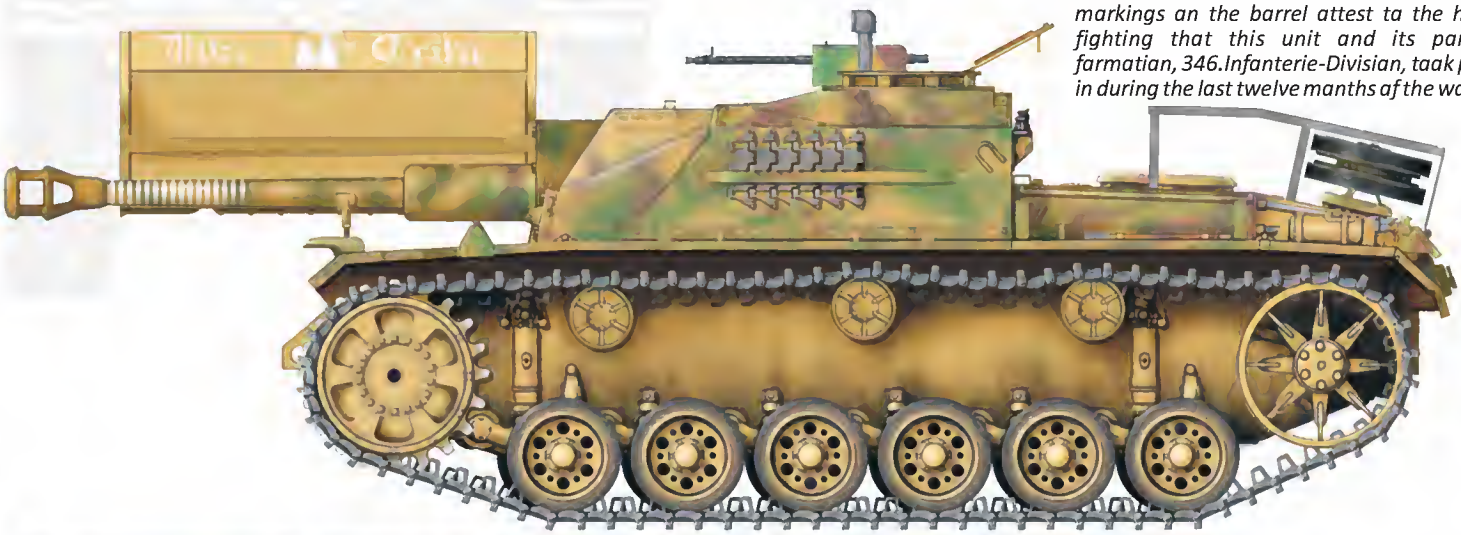
Fram September 1943 until September 1944 all tanks and assault guns left the assembly plants with a caating af Zimmerit anti-magnetic mine paste. This thick, cement-like substance was applied using variaus taals leaving a distinctive pattern which cauld - in mast instances - identify the manufacturer. As the first Panther ausf G madels reached frant line units in April 1944, appraximately 1600 praductian vehicles wauld have been caated in Zimmerit befare the practice ceased. The examples shawn here are: 1) MAN praductian which was typified by shart vertical strakes braken up by langer vertical and harizantal lines farming a grid. These langer lines cauld sametimes be diaganals, particularly an mudguards and stawage bins but alsa an the turret sides. 2) The style af applicatian used by MNH wos similar ta the MAN version with the initiol short strakes applied harizontally. It is comman to encaunter vehicles with this pattern where Zimmerit has nat been applied ta the mudguards ar stawage bin. 3) The Daimler-Benz pattern exhibited a rather raugh, flat applicatian which was then braken up by vertical and harizantal lines, again farming a grid. The size af these grids varied widely and cauld be quite raughly applied as in aur example. This pattern was very similar ta that seen an Panther ausf A vehicles praduced by MNH.



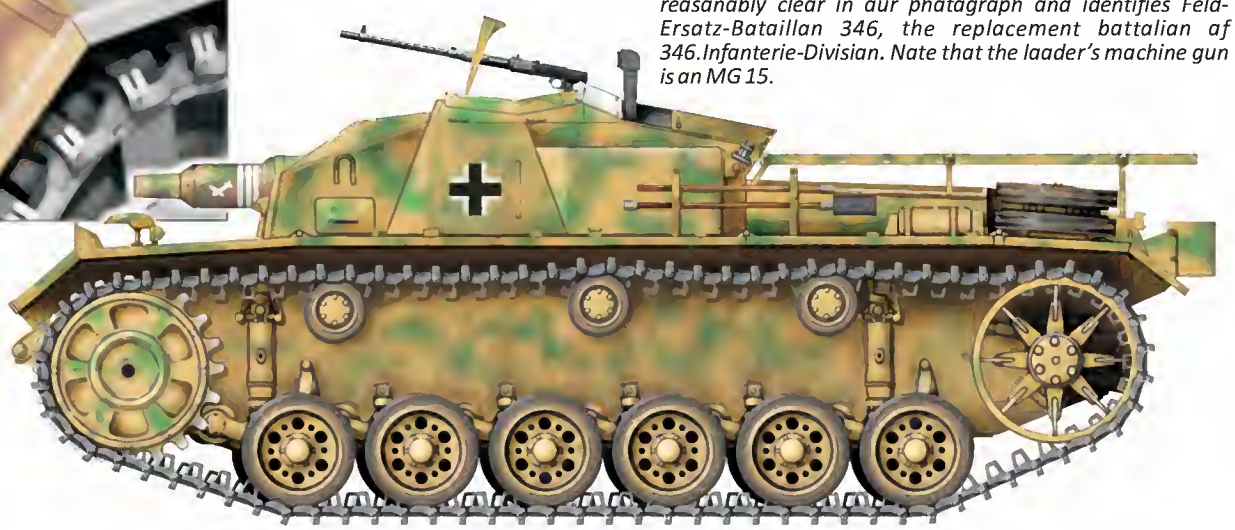
Pzkw V Panther ausf G, 3.Kompanie, Panzer-Lehr-Regiment 130. Western Germany, February, 1945. *Phatagraphed near Xanten, approximately twenty kilametres fram the Dutch-German barder, this vehicle features the later, raised exhaust extractar an the rear deck and the sa-called chin an the gun mantlet, the latter caincidentally intraduced at the same time that the applicatian af Zimmerit paste was discantinued. By this time camauflage patterns were being applied befare vehicles left the factary and that seen here is typical of Ponthers produced by MAN or Daimler-Benz. Nate that the spare raad wheel attached ta the turret has been very raughly hand painted. As part af Panzer-Lehr-Divisian the regiment was at this time attached ta 1.Fallschirm-Armee.*

Sturmgeschütz III ausf G, Panzerjäger-Abteilung 346. Amersfaart, Halland, May, 1945. *In April 1944 the battalian's secand campany was rearganised as a Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung and althaugh equipped with ten assault guns in Navember had been reduced ta the three vehicles shawn here and a single Marder III ausf M by the war's end. Of nate are the eighteen kill markings an the barrel and the names painted an the hull frant. The name an the right hand side is usually given as Nelly hawever we feel that it may in fact be Helly, a derivatian af an ald Narse name and nat uncamman in 1940's Germany. Presumably the practice af numbering individual vehicles with a campany number was camman at same time.*

Sturmgeschütz III ausf G, Panzerjäger-Abteilung 346. Amersfaart, Halland, May, 1945. *The brackets an the mudguard wauld suggest that this vehicle may have been fitted with Schürzen in the same manner as the assault gun depicted abave at same time. In ather praductian features - including the welded gun mantlet, the Rundumfeuer remately cantralled machine gun, gun travel lack and rear stawage rack - the twa are almast identical. The names an the hull frant are quite abviausly in the same calaur and style as thase depicted abave and again are girl's names - here Mitzi and Erika. The sixteen kill markings an the barrel attest ta the hard fighting that this unit and its parent farmatian, 346.Infanterie-Divisian, taak part in during the last twelve manths af the war.*



Sturmgeschütz III ausf C/D, Panzerjäger-Abteilung 346. Amersfoort, Holland, May, 1945. *Phatagraphed in campany with the twa vehicles shawn abave, this elderly assault gun was handed aver fram Panzer-Ersatz und Ausbildungs-Regiment Hermann Gäring, passibly in late 1944. In camman with the ather vehicles, this Sturmgeschütz features a number af kill rings an the barrel with what appears ta be a marking claiming a destrayed enemy aircraft. The unit insignia shawn at left an the vehicle's fender is reasanably clear in aur phatagraph and identifies Feld-Ersatz-Bataillan 346, the replacement battalian af 346.Infanterie-Divisian. Nate that the laader's machine gun is an MG 15.*



Although the officiol coption of this US Army photograph is unclear, it was probably taken near Erp, approximately 5 kilometres east of Veghel, at some time around 23 September. The OKW situotion mop of Wednesday, 2[illegible] September shows that Sturmgeschutz-Brigode 2[illegible] wos operating in this oreo in support of Ponzer-Brigade 107, moving towords the Eindhoven-Nijmegen r[illegible]ad from the east. T[illegible] production features of this vehicle that remoin - including the Alkett pottern Zimmerit and gun trovel lock - are evident on the other vehicles of that battali[illegible]n.

Photogrophed in the town of Oosterbeek, ot some time ofter the bottles for Arnhem, this Tiger II of 3.Komponie, schwere Ponzer-Abteilung 506 wos ottoched to Kompfgruppe von Allwörden ond was disobled on 25 September 1944. Despite the extensive domoge, troces of the tonk's comoufloge scheme con be seen ond it oppeors that the gun's muzzle broke is still in ploce, olthough it is missing in most of the other photogrophs of this vehicle. Controry to Allied reports, this wos the only Tiger lost in Oosterbeek.

The photographs on this ond the facing poge depict Sturmgeschütz III ossoult guns of Sturmgeschütz-Brigode 280 fighting in the streets of Arnhem ond Oosterbeek. This photogroph shows ossoult guns of the bottolion heoding towords Utrechtsweg, the highest point of the town, os port of Kompfgruppe Möller. The vehicle seen here is olso shown ond discussed in the illustrotion section on poge 13.

Photogrophed during the ceose fire of Wednesdoy, 20 September in Noorderweg, Oosterbeek - which runs off Utrechtsweg towords the roilwoy line - this ossoult gun is the commond vehicle of Mojor Kühme. This vehicle is olso shown ond discussed in the illustrotion section on poge 13.

Two heavily comoufloged Sturmgeschütz III ossoult guns of the bottolion ore seen here, moving west, neor the Arnhem Municipol Museum building in Utrechctsweg on Tuesdoy, 19 September. Inset: Another view of the bottolion commonder's vehicle shown in the photogroph ot the bottom of the focing poge with Mojor Kühme visble in the cupolo looking to his left.

Phatagraphed in late September 1944, this vehicle was disabled near Erp, narth-east af Eindhaven, by a British Sherman tank. This Befehlspanzerwagen V Panther ausf G af Panzer-Brigade 107 is shawn and discussed further an page 19 af the illustratian sectian.

Phatagraphed at Maerdijk, abaut 10 kilametres narth af Breda, in Navember 1944 this Jagdpanther af schwere Heeres-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 559 is shawn in the illustratian sectian an page 16 and the marking an the near side fender is discussed in detail.

At left: The Pzkw Ponther V ousf G of Ponzer-Brigode 107 coptured by the British 6th Guords Tonk Brigode in Overloon. Severol photogrophs of this vehicle exist including o number where the hull ond turret hove been pointed with o rough coot of whitewosh. This vehicle is olso shown ond discussed further on poge 21 of the illustrotion section. Below: Two obondoned Pzkw Ponther V ousf G tonks photogrophed in 1945. Although we connot be certoin, these vehicles moy hove been in compony with the lote model tonk shown in the illustrotion section on poge 21 of Ponzer-Lehr-Regiment 130. The lote production feotures ond foctory opplied comoufloge pottern - together with the presence of o British or Conodion soldier - would oll point to the locotion being Hollond or northern Germony.

Phatagraphed in Geilenkirchen, same time during Navember 1944, the Pzkw V Panther ausf G shawn in bath images an this page may be fram II.Abteilung, Panzer-Regiment 33 af 9.Panzer-Divisian. Just visible in the tap phatagraph behind the turret rear access daar is a white-autlined number which seems ta be either 611 ar 811, bath being possible. The battalion commonly repeated the vehicle's number an the turret sides hawever any number that may have been applied ta this tank is unfartunately cavered by the thick faliage camauflage.

This Jagdpanzer V Jagdpanther was phatagraphed during the final days af Operatian Veritable in February 1945 sauth af Cleve, near the Dutch-German barder. This vehicle may have been fram schwere Panzerjäger-Abteilung 655 which was attached ta 1.Fallschirm-Armee and aperated against the British in this area. The battalian was equipped with Sturmgeschütz III assault guns in its first and third companies and Jogdpanther tank destrayers with its secand. In the originol print of this photograph the number 233, prabably in red and autlined in white, is just visible below the Balkenkreuz an the hull side.

Phatagraphed an 3 March 1945 near Weeze, sauth-east af Nijmegen and less than 5 kilametres fram the Dutch barder, this Sturmgeschütz III ausf G has last its hull Schürzen althaugh the brackets that hald it are still in place. Judging by the damage ta the frant fender and the rood wheels this vehicle moy have follen victim to o mine. This assault gun moy be from Ponzer-Abteilung 115 af Generalleutnant Eberhardt Radt's 15.Panzergrenadier-Divisian which had thirteen af these vehicles an hand in March and was prabably the anly unit equipped with assault guns in the area at that time.

THE GERMAN ARMY IN NORTH-WEST EUROPE, APRIL 1945

Oberbefehlshaber Nord-West was formed on 7 April 1945 and controlled all German forces stationed in Holland, Denmork - and at that time - parts of north-western Germony. Subordinoted directly to OB Nord-West were the stoff elements of 331.Infonterie-Division, an independent Ponzer-Jagd-Brigode and the regimental sized Kampfgruppe 199. As can be imagined, the military situation was extremely fluid during the lost months of the wor and some explanation ond description of the higher command formations ot leost may be helpful. This is provided on the focing poge.

Oberbefehlshaber Nord-West

25.Armee

- SS und Polizei Führer Niederlande
- Seekommandant Ost Holland
- Seekommandant Ost-Mittel Hollond

Both Kriegsmarine units listed above were subordinated to 25.Armee in Moy 1945

XXX.Armeekorps z.b.V

By the end of the wor in May 1945 this formation may have been mode up af o Kampfgruppe of 346.Infanterie-Divisian anly and it is nat mentioned in the list which was compiled in the immediate post-war period. In early April the carps cantained the units shown below

- Stob, 20.Brigade z.b.V

Formed in September 1944 as an independent staff farmotion - ar Führungsstob - this unit wos transferred to Holland in the same month

- 249.Infanterie-Division

This division was formed in the Netherlands in March 1945 and was in fact a cover name for the Festungs-Kommandant Hoek van Holland - the fartificatian af the city af the same name situated at the entrance to the port of Rotterdam. The unit never reached divisional size.

- 34.Waffen-Grenadier-Division der SS Landstorm Nederland

Made up of volunteers of Dutch background, this unit was raised ta divisional status in February 1945 although it was never more than a weak brigade

LXXXVIII.Armeekorps

- Feldausbildungs-Division 149

Described in some sources as an infantry division this was in fact an operational training unit activated in March 1945. The unit disappears from the records in May.

- 346.Infanterie-Division

By the end of the war in May 1945 this division had been reduced to a Kampfgruppe

- 361.Volksgrenadier-Division

The division was disbanded in February 1945

- 6.Fallschirmjäger-Divisian

Transferred from 1.Fallschirm-Armee in March or April 1945

- 20.Fallschirmjäger-Division

A division in name only, this formation was raised from less than five thousand men of the Fallschirmjäger-Ausbildungs-und Ersatz-Division in early April 1945

1.Fallschirm-Armee

II.Fallschirm-Korps

- 7.Fallschirmjäger-Division
- 8.Fallschirmjäger-Division
- 245.Infanterie-Division

This divisian taak part in Operatian Nordwind in January 1945 and was at that time considered to be completely warn aut. Tronsferred ta 1.Fallschirm-Armee in April 1945 it does not appear on the May order of battle for OB Nord-West

- 346.Infanterie-Division

By May 1945 much of this division hod been absarbed by 7.Follschirmjäger Division while o Kompfgruppe remained with XXX.Armeekorps z.b.V

LXXXVI.Armeekorps

Re-named Armeegruppe Straube in May 1945

- Seekommandant Ostfrieland

Subordinated to the corps in May 1945

- Fallschirmjäger-Division Gericke

Renamed 21.Fallschirmjäger-Division sometime in March 1945 this unit was raised fram Sturm-Brigade Gericke. The title used here is probably unofficial

- 15.Panzergrenadier-Division

This division was involved in the heavy fighting around the Venlo bridgehead in late 1944 and by March 1945 the number of serviceable vehicles had been reduced to eight StuG III, three Pzkw IV and ten PzIV/70.

- 325.Schatten-Division

By March 1945 this division had been re-equipped and renamed Infanterie-Division Jutland. It does not appear on the May list for this corps

- Division Nr.471

This divisian arrived in Halland without Grenadier-Ersatz-Regiment 561 which was sent to the Oder Front

- Division Nr.490

At least one official, contemporary document refers to this farmation as a fully organised infantry division.

- Panzer-Verband GD

This unit was raised from the reformed Ersatz-Brigade Grossdeutschland as Panzergrenadier-Ersatz-und Ausbildungs-Brigade GD, renamed Panzer-Ausbildungs-Verband GD in April 1945 and absarbed by 15.Panzergrenadier-Division later in the same manth. It is referred ta in at least one official document by the title used here

Armeegruppe Blumentritt

Korps Stabs Ems

Formed from elements of XXXI.Armeekorps z.b.V

- Division Nr. 480

Formed from training and replacement units of the full division with Volkssturm-Bataillon Rothenburg. Re-named Division z.b.V. Gilbert in May 1945

- 172.Infanterie-Division z.b.V

Roised from Police units and Navol personnel. Cantained the replacement elements of Werfer-Regiment 2 and Festungs-Artillerie-Regiment 1350

- 2.Morine-Infanterie-Division
- Kompfcommondant Bremen

Recorded as being attached in Moy and made up af a replacement battalian af 18.SS-Panzergrenadier-Division Horst Wessel with scratch Police ond Naval units

- 8.Flak-Division

By April 1945 the divisian retained its mobile elements only, which by the following month had been reduced to ten heavy and five medium and light batteries

Stellvertretende XI.Armeekorps

Raised from the staff of XI.Armeekorps depot at Hannover. Attached in April this unit disappears from the records in May

- 3.Panzergrenadier-Division

A Kampfgruppe was all that remained of this divisian by April 1945. In the previous month the division reported that just nine StuG III, a single Pzkw IV and twenty PzIV/70 tank destroyers were available, although just six of the latter were combat ready

Kampfcommandant Hamburg

Canfirmed as being attached in late April this formation disappears from the records in May

- Division-Hamburg-Nord
- Division-Hamburg-Sud

Korps Witthöft

Recorded as being attached in late April and early May by which time its canstituent units had either been withdrawn or incorporated into Kampfgruppe Krumholz

- Armeekorps z.b.V
- Divisionsstab Oetken
- Kommandeur Panzertruppen X

A regimental sized, ad-hoc formation made up from Panzergrenadier-Ersatz-und Ausbildungs-Bataillonen 76 and 90 and Panzerjäger-Ersatz-und Ausbildungs-Abteilung 20 referred to as the first, second and third battalions respectively.

Oberbefehlshaber West. In June 1944 the overall command of all German armed forces in France, Belgium and the Netherlands was exercised by Oberbefehlshaber West (OB West), originally headquartered in Paris, under Generalfeldmarschall von Rundstedt. The ground forces controlled by OB West included Heeresgruppe B and Panzergruppe West in Normandy, Heeresgruppe G in southern France and the Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Niederlande. The latter controlled the formations stationed in Holland. All German units in the Netherlands, including those of the Waffen-SS, come under the command of OB West until mid-April 1945, when the greater part of Holland north of the river Rhine was cut off from Germany.

Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Niederlande. The military commander for Holland, or indeed any of the occupied countries, was responsible for the security of that country including defence against enemy incursions and the suppression of partisan activity. He was also the Wehrmacht's representative to any civilian authority. From its inception until November 1944, General der Flieger Christiansen had held the position of Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Niederlande. In November 1944, Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Niederlande was incorporated into the newly raised 25.Armee under the command of General Christiansen, replaced by General der Infanterie Blumentritt on 29 January 1945. Confusingly the title Wehrmachtbefehlshaber Niederlande - abbreviated to W.B.Nl - was still being used on OKW situation maps as late as March 1945.

25.Armee. In early November 1944, a completely new formation entitled 25.Armee was formed using the staffs of Armeeabteilung Kleffel - a reinforced, corps-sized battle group - and Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber Niederlande. From its creation until April 1945, 25.Armee was subordinated to Heeresgruppe H. Just six days after its formation, in an effort to conceal the build up for the coming Ardennes Offensive, 25.Armee assumed the title of 15.Armee, which was then transferred from Holland to the area around Aachen to replace 5.Panzerarmee. As part of the same deception operation 15.Armee was given the temporary name of Armeegruppe von Manteuffel while 5.Panzerarmee was referred to as Feldjägerkommando z.b.V.. Although these cover names were supposed to have been dropped with the commencement of the offensive on 16 December 1944, in some contemporary documents 25.Armee continued to be referred to as 15.Armee as late as January 1945 which is no doubt the cause of some confusion in a number of modern accounts. From 7 April 1945, the staff of 25.Armee also acted as the command of the newly created Oberbefehlshaber Niederlande - although the command of the army's field units was retained by General der Kavallerie Kleffel, who had replaced General Blumentritt on 20 March 1945.

Oberbefehlshaber Niederlande. Formed on 7 April 1945, Oberbefehlshaber Niederlande controlled all German ground forces operating in Holland including formations of the Waffen-SS and other SS and Police units. Just over one week after its formation, on 18 April 1945, Canadian army units reached the Zuider Zee, cutting off the German troops in what was now referred to as Festung Holland. Despite the grand title, Oberbefehlshaber Niederlande was effectively a command and control formation and was subordinated to Oberbefehlshaber Nord-West. The units of Oberbefehlshaber Niederlande, commanded by Generaloberst Blaskowitz, capitulated to the Allies at Wageningen, approximately 20 kilometres east of Arnhem, on 6 May 1945. An interesting anecdote suggests that the surrender would have taken place on the previous day, when the fighting did indeed cease, but was postponed due to the lack of a typewriter.

Heeresgruppe B. The army group took part in the fighting in Normandy, between June and August, suffering heavy casualties. In September 1944 Heeresgruppe B, with its headquarters at Oosterbeek in Holland and commanded by Generalfeldmarschall Walter Model, controlled 7.Armee, 15.Armee and 1.Fallschirm-Armee - the latter two formations stationed in the Netherlands. Although severely depleted by the Normandy fighting, 7.Armee took part in operations in Belgium, Luxembourg and western Germany and was transferred to the east just eight days before the end of the war. The creation of Heeresgruppe H in November 1944, specifically to control the formations engaged in the defence of the Netherlands, saw the area of operations of Heeresgruppe B shift south from Holland to the Lower Rhine.

Heeresgruppe H. On 11 November 1944, a new army group was formed under the command of Generaloberst Student specifically to co-ordinate the units fighting principally in Holland but also, at that time, parts of the Nordrhein-Westfalen region of Germany. This freed Heeresgruppe B to prepare for the Ardennes Offensive. The two major formations of Heeresgruppe H were 1.Fallschirm-Armee and 15.Armee, the latter replaced within a week by 25.Armee. In April 1945, the units of Heeresgruppe H were incorporated into the newly created Oberbefehlshaber Nordwest.

Oberbefehlshaber Nord-West. Formed on 7 April 1945 and commanded by Generalfeldmarschall Ernst Busch, OB Nord-West controlled all German forces serving in Holland and Denmark until 18 April when the Allies reached the Zulder Zee cutting off the German units stationed in the western Netherlands. Within days Oberkommando der Wehrmacht assumed direct command of all military units operating in Denmark and northern Germany effectively relegating OB Nord-West to the command of those units stranded in the areas the western Holland still held by the Germans. At some time in early May, OB Nord-West was renamed OB Nord - exactly when is not clear however the latter title appears on a number of contemporary German military documents relating to the surrender of May 1945.

In good order men of 6.Fallschirmjäger-Division march into captivity in May 1945 near Amsterdam. Below, left: The Luftwaffe Ground Assault Badge instituted on 31 March 1942 and awarded to men who either took part in at least three separate engagements on different days, were wounded in an attack or were awarded a decoration as a result of taking part in a ground assault. Those killed in action were automatically eligible. This award superseded the General Assault Badge and the Infantry Assault Badge for Luftwaffe personnel and those men who had been awarded the army badges were ordered to replace them. An order of 11 November 1944 introduced numbered versions however they are extremely rare and there is some evidence that none were ever presented. In the original print of our photograph it is possible to identify one of theses badges being worn by the Unteroffizier in the centre of the front rank.

An 8.8cm Pak 43 anti-tank gun said to have been photographed at Nieuwland on the approaches to Middelburg, the principal town on the island of Walcheren. At least one of these guns was encountered by the Canadians when they attempted to storm the causeway across the Sloe canal between Tuesday, 31 October and Saturday, 2 November. As part of the Walcheren garrison elements of Artillerie-Regiment 170 commanded by Oberst Franz Lex were stationed in this area between Nieuwland and Arnemuiden and may have been equipped with a small number of these guns.

NOTES

1) According to the records of LXXXVIII.Armeekorps, the division's Panzerjäger-Abteilung 719 had ten 7.5cm PaK 40/1 auf Lorraine Schlepper self-propelled guns on hand at the beginning of September. Sievers however makes no mention of them in his post-war account of the actions near the Albert canal.

2) Before it was disbanded in November, Kampfgruppe Chill controlled remnants of Grenadier-Regiment 1054, Grenadier-Regiment 1055, Ersatz-Bataillon 185, Artillerie-Regiment 185 and Nachricten-Abteilung 185 - all from 85.Infanterie-Division. The first battalion of Fallschirmjäger- Regiment 2 and men from Ersatz-und Ausbildungs-Abteilung Hermann Göring and Batoillon Ohler were attached as Kampfgruppe Dreyer, as were the first and third battalians of Fallschirmjäger- Regiment 6 - and later the second and fourth - as Kampfgruppe von der Heydte. The staff of Artillerie-Regiment 185 and the survivors of the regiment's II.Abteilung - sometimes referred to as Gruppe Ackermann - were reinforced by three batteries of on artillery training unit of the Hermann Göring division, two batteries of a Waffen-SS replacement regiment and a battery of 8.8cm guns of Flak-Abteilung 925.

3) The mixed Waffen-SS unit was led by Sturmbannführer Heinrich Heinke who had commanded the replacement battalion of 10.SS-Panzer-Division and consisted mainly of men from Heinke's unit and SS-Ponzergrenadier-Regiment 21. The suggestion in most accounts that the assault guns were from SS-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 10 is certainly incorrect as the battalion was stationed in the Aachen area until at least 19 September.

4) The 7.62cm guns of the Ponzerjäger company lacked any transport and having to be manhandled were all apparently in exposed positians. The company commander, Hauptmann Brockes, was mortally wounded.

5) Major Berndt-Joochim Freiherr von Maltzahn is referred to in many accounts as Oberstleutnant, however he was not promoted until 1945. He survived the war to serve in the Bundeswehr although his brothers Dankward, Hartwig and Wolf-Wigand were all killed in action. The story of the independent Panzer brigades that served in the west will be dealt with in detail in a future title.

6) The suggestion that this force included Luftwaffen-Festungs-Bataillon X has been proven incorrect. At this time Sturmbannführer Roestel's battle group was able to field fifteen Jagdpanzer IV L/48 tank destroyers.

7) In some accounts the vehicles of this battalion are referred to as Jagdpanzer, however the battalion's second company reported that five Sturmgeschütz III were on hand in August 1944 with the total rising to fourteen, giving a full company, by the following December.

8) The garrison of Walcheren was made up from elements of 70.Infanterie-Division including Festungs-Infanterie-Regiment 1019 and Festungs-Infonterie-Regiment 1020, Divisions-Füsilier-Botaillon 70, Pionier-Bataillan 170 ond two battalions of Artillerie-Regiment 170. The division's Festungs-Infanterie-Regiment 1018 and a battalion of its artillery regiment and the Panzerjäger battalion had been detached earlier in the year. Referred to as a Magenkranken-Division, almost all this formation's infantrymen suffered from chronic stomach disorders. Festung-Stamm-Truppen LXXXIX had been intended to compensate for the loss of the infantry regiment but it was little more than a battalion, made up in most part from elderly men armed with captured or obsolete weopons. In oddition the gorrison controlled Marine-Artillerie-Abteilung 202 and Marine-Flak-Abteilung 810 and other smaller Kriegsmarine and Luftwaffe units.

9) At this time Püchler's command consisted of Infanterie-Divisionen 346, 711 and 719 - although all these divisions were badly under strength. An attempt had been made to rebuild 346.Infanterie-Division by the addition of Festungs-Infanterie-Regiment 1018 which had been stationed on Walcheren and the corps had been reinforced with remnants of other depleted formations including Infanterie-Divisionen 245, 331 and 344 and parts of a Luftwaffe ground unit. In addition, several independent armoured units including Sturmgeschütz-Brigaden 244 and 280 and Heeres-SturmArtillerie-Brigade 667 with parts of schwere Panzerjäger-Abteilung 559 were attached to the corps at varlaus times during the September-November period as was Kampfgruppe Chill and Fallschirmjöger-Regiment 6.

10) The city is rarely referred to by its full name, most locals using the abbreviated form of Den Bosch.

11) This assault gun unit had been detached from the Panzerjäger battalion of 256.Volks-Grenadier-Division. By late 1944 the anti-tank battalions of many infantry divisions had o company equipped with assault guns or tank destroyers. Somewhat confusingly the company was referred to as a Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung, its number arrived at by adding 1000 to the number of the parent formation. Both forms of address continued to be used however with Neumann's account of the battle referring to 2.Kompanie/Panzerjäger-Abteilung 256 and the OKW situation map for 24 October noting that Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 1256 was ottached to 712.Infanterie-Division.

12) Over 3,000 V2 missiles were fired during the course of the wor and more than half of those were directed at Antwerp.

Unterfeldwebel (Panzerjäger), schwere Panzerjäger-Abteilung 559. Schijndel, September 1944. *In the early war years Panzerjäger crewman allacated ta armaured vehicles were issued the black Panzer unifarm as warn by tank crews. Ta differentiate between the twa branches the Panzerjäger ware a Gathic P cypher an their shaulder straps abave their regimental number, embraidered in pink far enlisted men while a silver metal cypher and unit number identified seniar NCOs and gilt metal was used far afficers. Far security reasans, in the frant line, enlisted men ware plain Panzer type shaulder straps hawever the NCOs and afficers, after remaving the regimental numbers, cantinued ta wear their metal cyphers. By 1942 the black Panzer unifarms were gradually replaced by a field-grey versian as warn by the persannel af the artillery's assault gun battalians - althaugh the Panzerjäger crews retained the distinctive lazenge shaped death's head callar patches which were simply transferred aver ta the new unifarm. With the intraductian af the field-grey unifarm the twa branches were naw easily differentiated and there was na requirement far the P cypher. Nanetheless, there is abundant phatagraphic evidence canfirming that these metal cyphers cantinued ta be warn by NCOs and afficers. The new unifarm cansisted af a jacket and trausers cut ta the same design as the black Panzer unifarm but made af field-grey clath. The field jacket was dauble breasted and came dawn anly ta the hips and a dark grey tricat, callared shirt and black tie were mandatary. Insignia an the Panzerjäger unifarm cansisted af the standard Heer natianal emblem - warn an the lawer right breast - and the distinctive lazenge shaped, Tatenkapf callar patches. Althaugh the latter were naw specifically manufactured with a field-grey base, the earlier black patches were warn thraughaut the war as can be seen in the phatagraph belaw which depicts the laader af a Jagdpanther tank destrayer and was taken in mid-1944. Mareaver, ta canfuse matters further, regulatians stated that Panzerjäger in armaured vehicles were ta wear the standard Litzen insignia an a field-grey, lazenge shaped callar patch. The shaulder straps an this Panzerjäger denate his NCO rank and they are alsa piped in the pink branch calaur ar Waffenfarbe. Pinned ta the shaulder straps is the silver metal P cypher. Attached ta his jacket is the ribban af the Iran Crass, 2nd Class and the general assault badge - alsa pictured belaw. The field trausers had scallaped single buttaned flaps and the trauser legs were af a generaus cut with a tie tape fastening at the battam. His headwear is the papular M43 field cap. The faatwear is the M37 lace-up ankle baats - which had been standard issue since January 1941 - with Panzer and field-grey armaured crew unifarms. This seniar NCO's equipment includes the army enlisted man's leather belt and a P38 pistal in its saftshell halster. Outside his vehicle an a recannaissance missian, he has equipped himself with a pair af 6x30 field binaculars and field map.*

Belaw: An early praductian Sturmgeschütz III ausf G af SS-Panzer-Regiment 10 phatagraphed in Maaseik near the Dutch-Belgian barder in September 1944. Bath 7.Kampanie and 8.Kampanie af this regiment were equipped with assault guns during the battles in Narmandy and Halland.

Belaw: A field-grey Kriegsmarine shaulder strap warn by a Maat - the equivalent af the army's Unteraffizier rank - af a caastal artillery unit. At right: Brigadefuhrer Heinz Harmel the cammander af 10.SS-Panzer-Divisian phatagraphed in Arnhem during September 1944.

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